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ABSTRACT

Articles address a variety of ways in which imagination can be used to enhance second language teaching and learning. They include: "Multiple Intelligences and Second Language Acquisition" (Mary Ann Christison); "Spellbound in the Language Class: A Strategy of Surprise" (Gertrude Moskowitz); "The Imagination: Where Roles and Images Reside" (Robert Landy); "The Imagination and CD-ROM: Multimedia Language and Culture Instruction" (Thomas J. Garza); Reel Talk: Movies, Values, and Language Acquisition" (Kara Griffin); "Thematic Photographs: From Past Lives to Creative Writing" (Larry Carter); "De-Mythicizing the Research Paper" (Barbara Guenther); "See It! Tell It! Write It!" (Kathleen Mata); "Making a Song and Dance: The Musical Voice of Language" (Paul Newham); "Grandma Moses Meets ESL: Art for Speaking and Writing Activities" (Claudia J. Rucinski-Hatch); "On Creating Theatrical Collages with ESL Students" (Rhonda Naidich); "The Creative Connection in Movies and TV: What 'DeGrassi High' Teaches Teachers" (Jim Ward, Suzanne Lepeintre); "Cultural Artifacts" (Joshua Dale); "Graphics from the Front: Artistry in Language Teaching" (Susan Gill); "Writing in Music" (Sharon Meyers); "Novels and Films: A Dynamic Double Feature" (Leslie Criston); "Getting Imaginative in the Language Laboratory" (Darci L. Strother); and "Creating Theater in the ESL Classroom" (Maria Guida). (MSE)

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The Journal Of The Imagination In Language Learning

A publication for language teachers at all levels, K-12 through College

Edited by
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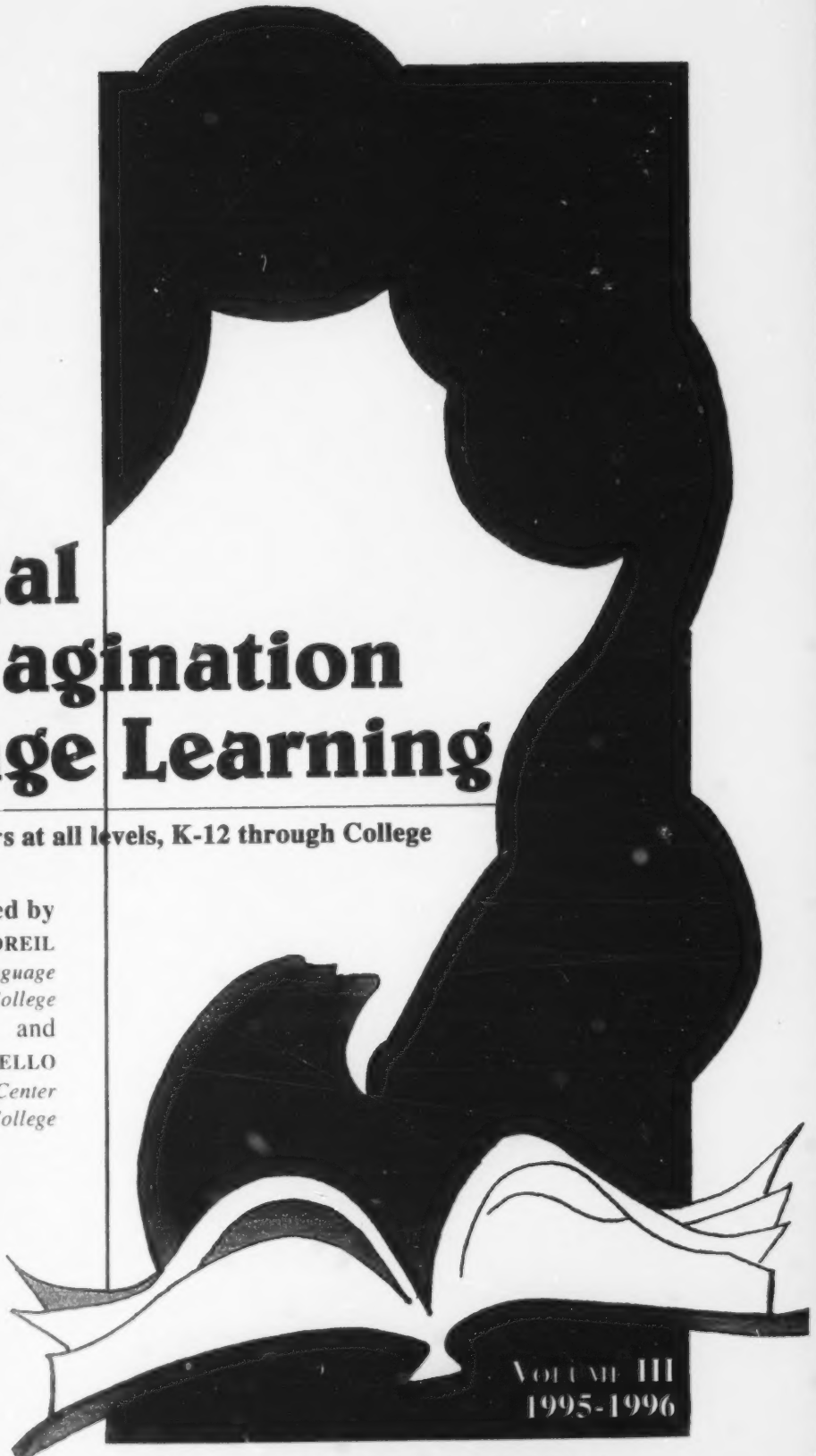

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The Journal of the Imagination in Language Learning is published annually in conjunction with the annual Conference on the Role of the Imagination in Language Learning at Jersey City State College. Although the sessions at that Conference take up the same issues, the *Journal* selects and publishes articles independently of the Conference.

The first two volumes of this *Journal* are also available in microfiche form: ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 381 995 (telephone 800-443-ERIC). ERIC services are offered in a great many libraries in the USA and abroad, and are also available on the Internet. Specific research questions can be directed to the ERIC Clearinghouse of Language and Linguistics, 1118 22nd Street NW, Washington, DC 20037. Telephone 800-276-9834 and e-mail: eric@cal.org.

The Journal of the Imagination in Language Learning is concerned with the following proposition: Attempts to acquire a language are significantly enhanced by the presence of an activated imagination. Both theoretical and practical articles or proposals for articles that are related to this broad area are welcome and should be addressed to either of the editors at *The Journal of the Imagination*, Hepburn Hall, Room 111, Jersey City State College, 2039 Kennedy Boulevard, Jersey City, New Jersey, USA 07305-1597. Dr. Clyde Coreil can be reached at 201-200-3087 (Voice Mail 201-200-3237). Dr. Mihri Napoliello: 201-200-3375. (FAX 201-200-3238).

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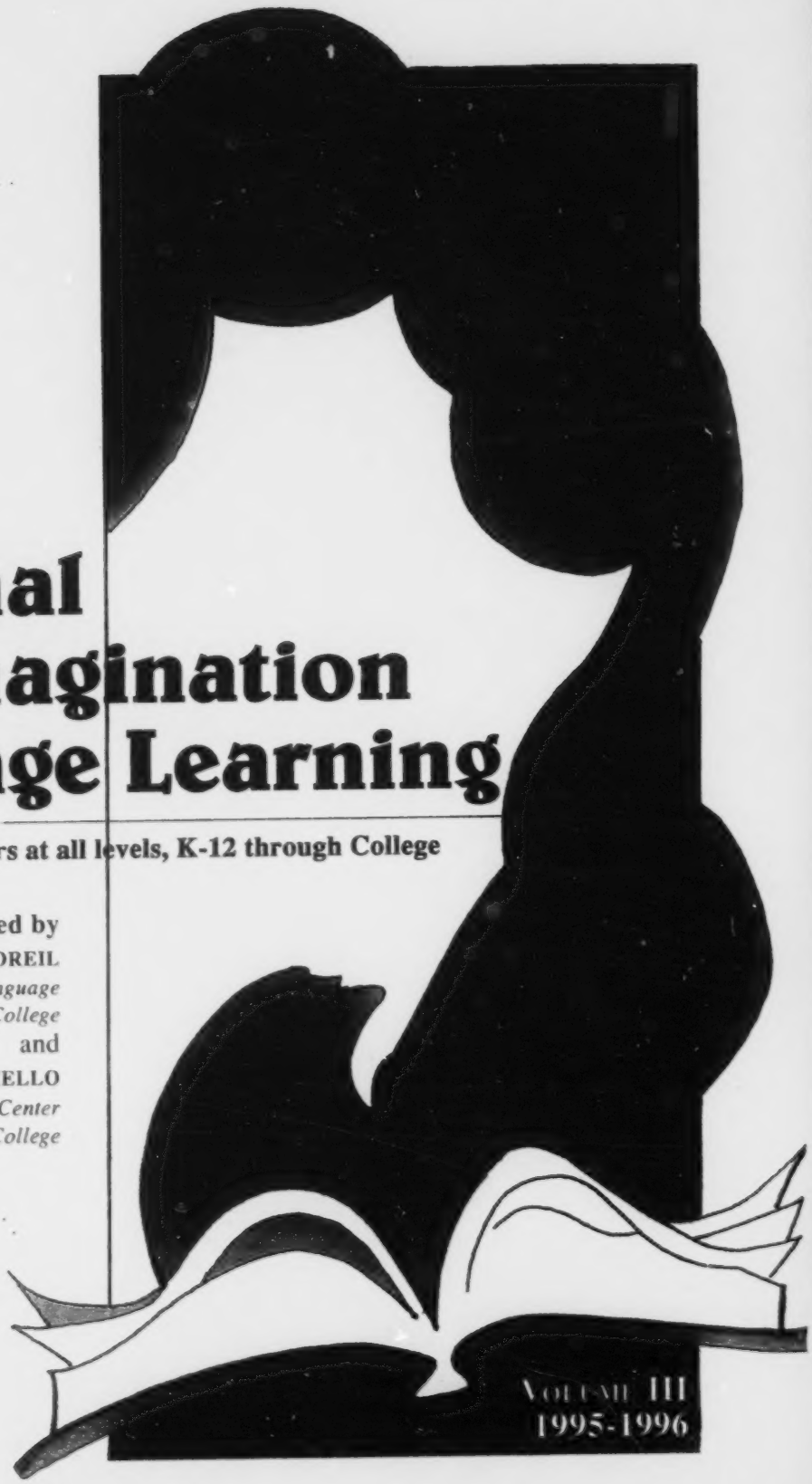

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Contents

Introduction 4

Multiple Intelligences and Second Language Acquisition
Mary Ann Christison 8

Spellbound in the Language Class: A Strategy of Surprise
Gertrude Moskowitz 16

The Imagination: Where Roles and Images Reside
Robert Landy 24

The Imagination and CD-ROM: Multimedia Language and Culture Instruction
Thomas J. Garza 36

Reel Talk: Movies, Values, and Language Acquisition
Kara Griffin 42

Thematic Photographs: From Past Lives to Creative Writing
Larry Carter 48

De-Mythicizing the Research Paper
Barbara Guenther 56

See It! Tell It! Write It!
Kathleen Mata 62

Making a Song and Dance: The Musical Voice of Language
Paul Newham 70

Grandma Moses Meets ESL: Art for Speaking and Writing Activities
Claudia J. Rucinski-Hatch 80

On Creating Theatrical Collages with ESL Students
Rhonda Naidich 86

The Creative Connection in Movies and TV: What "Degrassi High" *Teaches Teachers*
Jim Ward and Suzanne Lepeintre 92

Cultural Artifacts
Joshua Dale 98

Graphics from the Front: Artistry in Language Teaching
Susan Gill 104

Writing in Music
Sharon Myers 110

Novels and Films: A Dynamic Double Feature
Leslie Criston 114

Getting Imaginative in the Language Laboratory
Darci L. Strother 118

Creating Theater in the ESL Classroom
Maria Guida 122

Call for Correspondents 125

The Role of Imagination

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Introduction

The first two issues of The *Journal of the Imagination in Language Learning* were mainly concerned with making a point that seems obvious—language learning is significantly enhanced when the imagination is activated. Obvious, but often neglected in theory and practice. One of the main reasons for this neglect seems to have been the culturally based notion that the scientific method and the faculty of the imagination are in competition of some sort. Although science is thought to have "won," its victory remains threatened by a dark, primitive side of pre-intellectual consciousness that responds mainly to campfire lights casting the shadows of chanting dancers on the walls of the cave. The specter of those moving forms luring us away from the rational straight and narrow seems to be subconscious but indeed powerful.

Possibly, one effect of this scenario is to conceive of the imagination as insubstantial and dreamy, while science is thought to be concerned primarily with facts, formulas and products. That is unfortunate. Science is an approach to knowledge; the imagination is a mode of mental activity. To varying degrees, all thought involves imagination: the two are complementary and shed light on each other. There would seem, then, to be no reason why the imagination should not be defined in psycholinguistic and neurolinguistic terms and its effects measured and explored objectively through careful analysis. Yet the misconception of a basic opposition has had enormous influence, extending to pedagogy and often resulting in the dominance of quantification over the creative in the dynamics and principles of classroom presentation. Recently, there has been a welcome swing to more "natural" approaches, but the value of the imagination in language learning still needs to be loudly stressed and, more importantly, explored.

Imagination and the Computer

The piece by Thomas Garza, "The Imagination and CD-ROM: Multimedia Language and Culture Instruction," will hopefully be only the first in this *Journal* that explores the relevance of computer applications to the imagination. As we suggested above, there is no polar distance between science and the imagination; neither is there opposition between computers and the imagination. The fact of the matter is that the staggering possibilities of cyberspace can and will be quickly feasted on by the immense resourcefulness of the imagination. The ESL Program here at Jersey City State College has been fortunate enough to acquire a state-of-the-art computer lab, similar to the one Dr. Garza describes at the University of Texas. We at the *Journal* are, therefore, particularly interested in being of service in relating computers to the imagination. If you have suggestions, do let us know.

Harnessing Ideas

Although many of the other articles in this third issue are in the area of classroom techniques, we are quite pleased to include several that do not fit that category. For example, there are discussions by Robert Landy of his theory of roles in dramatic literature; by Mary Ann Christison of multiple intelligences; by Paul Newham of the primal powers of the voice; and by Larry Carter of lives lived in aging and ancient buildings. We ask that you be prepared to use your imagination and find ways to harness these ideas and tailor them to your personal repertoire of pedagogical tools.

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Call for Articles and Presentations

Some of the articles were written at our request; some result from proposals; some arrived without warning in the mail. All were very welcome. If you have an idea that you think might be right for the *Journal*, please get in touch. The average length is between 1,500 and 2,000 words. The style of writing we prefer is straightforward and direct—shorter sentences, clear examples, tight organization. Our somewhat flexible deadline for the next issue—Volume Four—is November 1, 1996, with publication in the fall. Earlier submissions will give us time to suggest revisions, which are often critical.

The same deadline (October 1, 1996) holds for proposals to present at the Eighth Annual International Conference on the Role of the Imagination in Language Learning, which will be held Friday, April 18, 1997, at Jersey City State College. More than 400 language teachers from kindergarten through college will attend the keynote address and the 18, seventy-minute workshops, scheduled for concurrent presentation in three periods with six workshops each. If you are interested in presenting, you should request an application form. If you are interested in attending, you might like to know that we have been able to keep the fee for participants down to $10. Workshop chairpersons—who will introduce and assist presenters and whose names will appear in the program—have not been assigned yet. If you are interested, please write to us as soon as possible.

We have also managed to keep the cost of the *Journal* well within reach: $5.00 including postage to addresses within the United States. Foreign addresses add $3.00. If you find even one article that interests you, please accept our urgent invitation to subscribe to Volume Four. Your order will help us survive in our present format, which is elaborate but—at least in our opinion—well worth the additional time and effort. Whether or not you send a check, please consider joining the persons in various categories who have indicated a willingness to correspond on matters concerning the imagination. You will find a list with addresses (some including E-Mail) on pages 115-117. Seize the moment and write to them. Tell them we sent you. You'll be glad you did.

The Imagination Center

We are pleased to announce that Jersey City State College will not only continue to support our efforts in the *Journal*, but it will also foster the development of what we are tentatively calling "The Center for the Imagination in Language Acquisition." "The Imagination Center"—for short. Initially, our main activities will be the *Journal*, the Conference, and the project outlined below. As new ideas emerge and as funding permits, we will widen our scope.

Making Videos

During the 1996-97 academic year, we will begin to make and collect videotapes of from 10 to 60 minutes of teachers demonstrating pedagogical techniques that call on the imagination. These tapes will be catalogued and sent out on request anywhere in the world. The only charge will be postage and handling—we hope to keep it down to two or three dollars. You are cordially invited to apply to participate by completing a Video Proposal Form. If that is accepted, you would proceed to make a video according to our policies and instructions. We would then set it in our format of an introduction and theme music. Please write for guidelines.

Sharing Materials

Although not directly related to the imagination, there is one service that our Center and this *Journal* will try to offer. Many of our colleagues work in language or research programs that have little or no budget for materials of any kind, including books. If you work in or know of such a program, we ask that you send us the relevant address and—if possible—a brief description of that program. If, on the other hand, you have professional journals, magazines, cassette recorders, tapes, books, VCR's or other materials that are gathering dust, we ask that you consider donating them to in-

stitutions or individuals in your own country or abroad. If you are interested, we will send you a couple of addresses and ask that you contact them directly. Please do *not* send us material.

We welcome comments of any kind on any subject related to the imagination and first or second language acquisition. Please indicate if we may consider publishing part or all of your letter.

Clyde Coreil
Mihri Napoliello

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Multiple Intelligences & Second Language Learners

by Mary Ann Christison

Dr. Mary Ann Christison is a professor of ESL/English and director of the International Center at Snow College and teaches graduate courses in the M.A. in TESL/TEFL program at the University of Utah. She is co-author of several teacher resource books for language teachers including Purple Cows and Potato Chips, Drawing Out, Community Spirit, *and* Look who's Talking. *Mary Ann works as language consultant both within the United states and abroad. Since 1993 she has been serving on the Board of Directors of the TESOL organization and was Convention Chair of the TESOL '95 Convention in Long Beach in March of 1995.*

Nature endows a child with a sensitiveness to order. It is a kind of inner sense that distinguishes the relationships between various objects themselves. It thus makes a whole of an environment in which the several parts are mutually dependent. When a person is oriented in such an environment, he can direct his activity to the attainment of specific goals. Such an environment provides the foundation for an integrated life.

Maria Montessori (1972, p. 55)

Introduction

Intelligence holds a certain mystique in Western society. Most people, it seems, are awed by their perception of it in others, perhaps even becoming defensive at the thought that their own intelligence might not measure up. Marilyn Vos Savant, the individual who has the world's highest recorded score on an IQ test, is often referred to as the most intelligent person in the world. Most of us are unable to define precisely what the term "intelligent" means in this context, but she is highly regarded for having lots of it. Because intelligence is so difficult to define as a single construct, most of us have no idea whether we are intelligent. Many of us have chosen not to find out.

Years ago while taking an undergraduate education class, I was given the opportunity to take an IQ test. The teacher had arranged for the entire class to be tested in order to encourage us to know more about educational tests. He also gave us extra credit on our final grades for taking the test. Even though the test was free, the time was convenient and extra credit would be given, only 25 percent of the class took him up on his offer. Of those who participated, more than two-thirds had taken the test previously. Why didn't the rest of us take this teacher up on his offer? I cannot speak for the other 75 percent, but I did not take the test because I did not want to find out that I was not intelligent. I was afraid it would be too discouraging. I didn't want to know how limited I might be. My guess is that other students in the class may have felt the same way.

In the mid-1980's, when I heard colleagues in other disciplines mention multiple intelligences, I must admit that I didn't look into the topic right away because of my fears about intelligence as a single construct: those fears expanded greatly at the mention of multiple intelligences and quite possibly multiple constructs. It sounded complicated. I was certain it involved many statistical procedures that I wouldn't understand.

One day, I was in the library looking for a resource book for a class I was teaching. Howard Gardner's book *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (1983) fell into my hands. Thumbing through the book, I remembered my feelings about intelligence tests, but I read several passages and was attracted almost immediately. Gardner said that our Western culture had defined intelligence too narrowly. He also seriously questioned the validity of taking people out of their natural learning environments and asking them to do isolated tasks as a measure of intelligence. Gardner suggested that intelligence had more to do with our capacity for solving problems in natural settings. All of these concepts made sense to me as an educator. I checked the book out of the library, began reading and studying, and have been applying multiple intelligence theory in my second language classrooms ever since.

Today many second language educators know about Gardner's theory. They can even name the seven intelligences and give examples of how they have used these intelligences in their own lives. However, it has been my observation that few second language educators actually consider the seven

intelligences in their lesson plans and overall curriculum. The purpose of this paper is twofold: to introduce language educators to the theory of multiple intelligences, and to demonstrate how to use multiple intelligences in lesson planning, language learning tasks, and assessment.

The Seven Intelligences

Gardner (1983) grouped human capabilities into seven categories which he called "intelligences." Weinreich-Haste (1985) claims that many people are surprised at some of the categories because they have never thought about these areas as being related to "intelligence."

Linguistic Intelligence: People who are linguistically intelligent have the ability to use words effectively both orally and in writing. They are effective in using language in a variety of ways—to convince others to do something, to remember information, and to talk about language itself.

Logical-Mathematical Intelligence: The ability to use numbers effectively and to reason well is a good indicator of logical-mathematical intelligence. People with this kind of intelligence are good at categorizing, classifying, inferencing, generalizing, calculating, and hypothesis testing.

Spatial Intelligence: This intelligence includes a sensitivity to form, space, color, line, and shape. It also includes the ability to graphically represent visual or spatial ideas.

Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence: A person with this kind of intelligence has the ability to express ideas and feelings with the entire body. This ability includes such physical skills as coordination, flexibility, speed, balance, etc. Actors, mimes, athletes, sculptors, mechanics, surgeons, or dancers often demonstrate this type of intelligence.

Musical Intelligence: This intelligence includes people who are very sensitive to rhythm, pitch or melody. It is demonstrated by people who have an intuitive, global understanding of music as well as by people whose understanding is more technical.

Interpersonal Intelligence: The ability to sense another person's moods, feelings, motivations, and intentions demonstrates this kind of intelligence. Interpersonal intelligence also includes the ability to respond effectively to other people in some pragmatic way, such as influencing them to follow a certain action.

Intrapersonal Intelligence: Having an accurate picture of yourself and being aware of your inner moods, intentions, temperaments, and desires is known as intrapersonal intelligence.

Differences from Talents and Aptitudes

Many educators look at these categories and wonder why Gardner calls them intelligences. Why aren't they *talents* or *aptitudes*? In order to show the difference between an intelligence and an aptitude or talent, Gardner identified basic "signs" that an intelligence might exhibit in order to be considered an intelligence and not a talent or an aptitude. Armstrong (1995) summarized these "signs" and placed them into the following categories.

1. They must be susceptible to isolation by brain damage. Assuming that there are brain structures for each intelligence, brain lesions can impair one intelligence while leaving all the others intact.

2. Evidence of single intelligences can be seen operating at very high levels in savants and prodigies. An example of this is the musical savant who can play a piano composition after hearing it only once.

3. There should be an identifiable developmental history of the intelligence. There are certain activities associated with each intelligence in an individual's growth. Each activity has a time of beginning in early childhood and a time of peaking during one's lifetime. For example, musical intelligence seems to peak early in order to develop a high level of proficiency.

4. The intelligence must be rooted in evolutionary history. Gardner hypothesized that each of the seven intelligences has its roots deeply embedded in the evolution of human beings. We find written notations in early cultures demonstrating the presence of linguistic intelligence. We also find early tool use showing bodily-kinesthetic intelligence.

5. The existence of an intelligence may be supported by psychometric findings. Gardner is no champion of standardized testing, but he does suggest that we can look at standardized tests for support of the theory of multiple intelligences. In the Wechsler Intelligence Scale, for example, children are asked questions that require linguistic intelligence (e.g., vocabulary), logical-mathematical intelligence (e.g., arithmetic), and spatial intelligence (e.g., picture arrangement).

Dr. Christison helps students explore their intelligences.

6. The intelligence must be supported by results of psychological experiments. Gardner believes that psychological tasks are a good way to see the intelligences working in isolation from one another. Subjects may master a specific skill, such as reading, but they do not transfer that success to logical-mathematical intelligence. In other words, even though they can read well (i.e., they may have a high linguistic intelligence), they might not be able to do mathematics (i.e., they may have a low mathematics intelligence).

7. An intelligence must have an identifiable set of core operations. Each intelligence has a different set of required operations in order for it to function. For example in musical intelligence the core operations may be the ability to discriminate among different musical notes and among various rhythmic structures.

8. An intelligence can be symbolized. For example, computer languages (e.g., Pascal) are learned easily by people with well-developed logical-mathematical intelligence, and Morse Code is learned by those with a well-developed musical intelligence. Gardner emphasizes that his multiple intelligence model is tentative and there may well be more than seven intelligences.

Key Points for Language Teachers and Students

According to Gardner, each person possesses all seven intelligences to varying degrees. This does not mean that we may be highly developed in all seven areas—it is particularly important to remember this in relation to second language learners. Our students, like most people, may be highly developed in one or two intelligences, moderately developed in one or two, and underdeveloped in the rest. Each intelligence functions in ways unique to each person; no one is the same as anyone else.

Gardner suggests that everyone has the capacity to develop all seven intelligences to a reasonably high level. This is encouraging for language educators. Success in helping our second language learners develop their intelligences—including linguistic intelligence—is a combination of the right environmental influences and quality instruction. Both of these are factors we can help control.

Intelligences work together in complex ways. Because no intelligence exists by itself, language learning activities may be successful because they actively encourage the use of several intelligences. I think of two traditional language learning activities like "Twenty Questions" or "Strip Story" (Christison and Bassano, 1995). Most language teachers and learners feel that learning takes place when these activities are used. Perhaps one reason they are so popular is that several intelligences are needed to carry out each activity. In "Twenty Questions," students have the name of an object or animal pinned to their backs. Everyone else knows the word on the student's back, but the student does not. Students find out by milling around, asking classmates "yes/no" questions until they discover who or what they are. In the "Strip Story" activity, each students receives a slip of paper containing part of a story. Students memorize their parts, give back their slips, and then proceed to line up and put the story back in the proper order. In these activities the students use linguistic, spatial, interpersonal, bodily-kinesthetic and logical-mathematical intelligences. If you ask students to tell you how they got their answers, you can also include intrapersonal intelligences.

Within each intelligence category, there are many different ways to be intelligent. For example, I have a friend who claims he has no bodily-kinesthetic intelligence because he does not participate in any sports. Yet, he built a fence around his property and added a deck to his home. I remind him that it takes a great deal of bodily-kinesthetic intelligence to complete these projects.

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Individual Multiple Intelligence Profiles

Armstrong (1995) believes that before we apply any model of learning in the classroom, we should apply it to ourselves as educators. Therefore, the first step in using Multiple Intelligence Theory is to determine our own multiple intelligence profile. If you have not taken an MI Inventory recently, I encourage you to refer to Appendix A in the Armstrong volume at this time and take the MI Inventory for Adults. As you learn more about your own profile, you will become more confident in the choices you make that affect your teaching. The purpose of the Inventory is to connect your life's experiences to the idea of multiple intelligences. The types of learning activities you choose as a teacher are often directly related to the totality of your experiences and in turn affect the multiple intelligence profile of your students. For example, if you grew up on a farm, you may have had many more opportunities to develop your bodily-kinesthetic intelligence than someone who grew up in a city. Consequently, as an adult, you may naturally choose activities that complement your own intelligence in that area, such as the familiar "strip story," the ESL version of "Mother, May I" or role plays.

Explaining MI Theory. Recent research supports the idea that learners benefit from instructional approaches that help them reflect on their own learning (Marzano, 1988), so the first step is to explain MI Theory to your language learners. Armstrong (1995) offers suggestions such as "The Multiple Intelligence Pizza." He begins by telling students that they are all smart and asks them to tell him some of the different ways they can be smart. As students respond, he writes their answers on the seven slices of "pizza" in the circle. Armstrong accepts all answers but includes only the seven smarts or a version of them on the pizza. The "smarts" according to Armstrong are: self smart, word smart, logic smart, people smart, music smart, body smart, and picture smart. This approach uses language and concepts students understand plus visual reinforcement. Once students understand the different ways they can be smart, they can take their own MI inventory and begin evaluating their own learning activities.

Keeping Track. The next step is to chart what you are already doing. It is important to have a clear idea of your own teaching style as it applies to MI Theory. Figure 1 shows the chart I used for Day One of a two-week study to track my own teaching. It will be noted that my brief analysis did not turn up anything in the categories "Mathematical/Logical" and "Musical."

At the end of the two-week period, I came to an awareness of how MI theory informed language teaching and learning in my classroom. My decisions about activities were made by choice and not by accident. I also learned some interesting facts about the relationship between the learning activities I chose and my own MI profile and life's experiences.

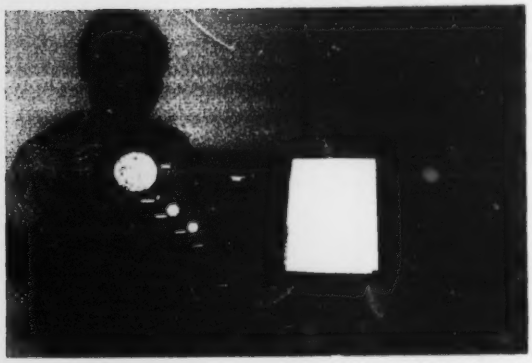
FIGURE 1

Day One: Multiple Intelligence Tracking Chart
Course: Intermediate Reading
Topic: Astronomy

Intelligences	Activity Types
Linguistic:	Students gave oral presentations on their posters.
Mathematical/Logical:	
Spatial:	The charts included planet arranged according to size and pictures.
Bodily-Kinesthetic:	Students placed charts on the walls and made presentations.
Musical:	
Interpersonal:	Students took part in a 1-paper, 2-people short chapter review.
Intrapersonal:	The chart activity asked students to draw on what they had learned and to present what they felt was important. The questioning at the end of the hour was reflective in nature.

Including Intelligences. Once I became better informed about MI theory and my own profile, I could begin to look at the learning activities I chose for my classes from that frame of reference. In the example introduced above, I developed four generic strategies for using logical-mathematical intelligence and musical intelligence—two for each intelli-

gence. In planning my lessons, I made certain to include at least one of these activities each week. Once I had the generic strategies, it was quite simple to change the content. For example, in order to include activities for musical intelligence, I taught the students the tunes and words to "Skip to My Lou" and "Michael Row Your Boat." Next, I asked the students to work in groups and create new words to the songs using the content from the chapters. Many students blossomed with this activity. Some students found the content much easier to remember when it was part of a song. Seldom did the class lack for student performers. One student even brought his guitar to class for his group's performance.



Imaginative Assessment: Two of Dr. Christison's students demonstrate learning by making astronomical charts.

Assessment. The next step was for me to match my methods of assessment to my language-learning activities. I wanted to make certain that my work was balanced for intelligences addressed not only in terms of the learning activities I provided, but also in the way I was assessing my students. Armstrong (1995) suggests creating 49 assessment contexts. So for each linguistic task for example, you create seven different generic assessments, one for each of the seven intelligences. I might ask my students to read an article. This is a linguistic task. My method of assessment could include writing a response. In this case, I would have a linguistic task with a linguistic assessment. However, if I asked the students to read an article and draw a picture, I would be using a spatial assessment. If they read an article and shared it with a partner, they would be using interpersonal intelligence as a means of assessment. I often allow students to choose the task and method of assessment from two or three alternatives. For an intermediate ESL reading class I taught, I let students decide how they wanted to let me know what they had learned in the astronomy chapter. Some chose to write papers, others made wonderful charts and displays, while one young man composed an original song about the planets in our solar system. Considering both assessment and task in addressing multiple intelligences greatly broadens and enhances a teacher's opportunities for creativity and imagination.

Conclusion

Feldman (1980), Walters and Gardner (1986) and Gardner (1993) have developed and worked with the concepts of *crystallizing* and *paralyzing* experiences. These are what they call the turning points in our lives. They most often happen during childhood, but they can happen at any time during our lives. I remember being told the story of Albert Einstein by my mathematics teacher in high school. When he was four years old, his father showed him a magnetic compass. It was this little compass that instilled in Einstein the desire to explore the nature of the universe and ultimately started him on the journey toward making monumental contributions in the field of physics. This little experience with the compass was a *crystallizing* experience for Einstein. It moved him to develop especially his logical-mathematical intelligence. *Paralyzing* experiences have just the opposite effect. They propel us to shut down an intelligence. I often wonder about the contributions of Mozart or Shakespeare. Would they have contributed in the same way in a different environment? Would either genius have blossomed in a culture where music or theater was considered the work of the devil?

As a language educator, I want to see my students have crystallizing experiences, those little sparks that "...light an intelligence and start its development toward maturity" (Armstrong, 1995, p. 22). It seems logical that Multiple Intelligence Theory can move us in that direction. It offers a model that can help language educators understand how their own learning style affects their teaching style and, ultimately, how that teaching style can affect student learning. I hope that this article has provided you with the beginning tools for understanding this theory. I also hope it has begun to open the door to an even broader range of considerations for choice of task and assessment in your lesson planning and curriculum development.

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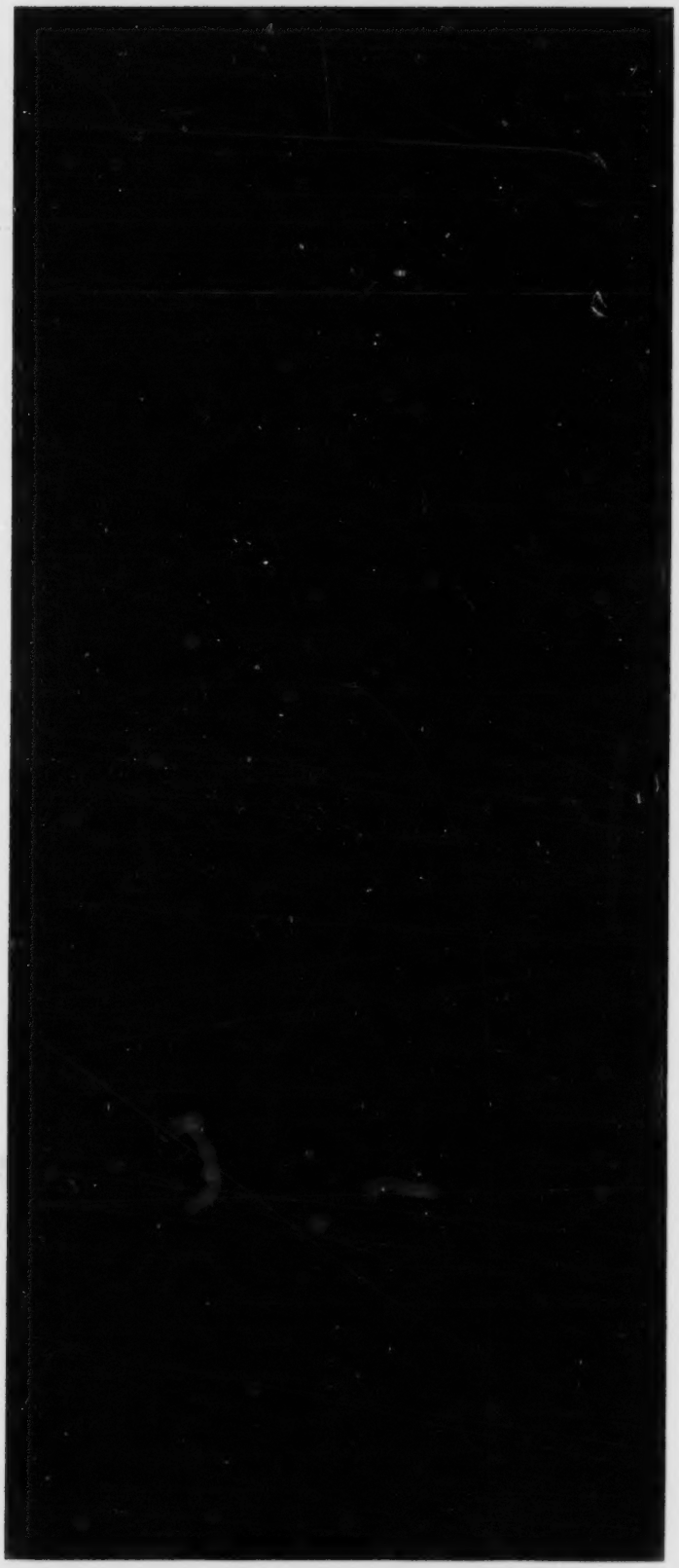

Spellbound in the Language Class: A Strategy of Surprise

Dr. Gertrude Moskowitz is professor and coordinator of Foreign Language Education at Temple University, where she has also served as coordinator of TESOL. She is noted for her publications emphasizing humanistic teaching: Caring and Sharing in the Foreign Language Class *(Heinle and Heinle) and* The Foreign Language Teacher Interacts *(Amidon Publications). Her most recent interest is multicultural education. In addition to training teachers, Dr. Moskowitz has worked with medical students, nurses, counselors, therapists, and social workers. She has given presentations on a wide variety of programs throughout the United States and abroad.*

By Gertrude Moskowitz

What in the world was Judge Lance Ito doing in that ESL class? And how did they ever get Frida Kahlo to come to their Spanish class? Really, you say a well-known reporter was actually in a French class today to do a story?

Oh, I get it. These teachers were showing VIDEOTAPES of these people in their classes! No? Then they appeared on satellite? Wrong again? You mean they WERE in these classes themselves? Hmm! Next thing you'll tell me is that the soothsayer from Julius Caesar appeared in a Latin class! He did?

What ARE you talking about? Oh, it's a technique that second language teachers can use to get celebrities and other guests to come to their classes, yet it's rarely ever used. What's it called? "Teacher-in-role?" Never heard of it. Tell me more!

Simply stated, teacher-in-role is where teachers themselves portray people other than themselves in their classes. In other words, the teacher changes roles (and disappears, so to speak, from the class) and becomes someone else instead.

You portray the person yourself? No way. I'm no great actor, only a ham at heart.

That's what language teachers have been told for years—that you should be a "ham" actor. But with teacher-in-role, you choose the roles you feel comfortable in. Besides, once you get into it with the students, you'd be surprised how you can get carried away in the part.

I guess I could at that. Always thought I might have hidden talent for the stage. But how do you carry out the whole idea? How do you get started?

For one thing, it comes as a surprise to the class. That is, it's not announced that you're taking on a new identity. So what you can do is mention that a guest is coming to the class the day before or that day and then leave the class to "find the guest" who seems to be lost or waiting in the office to be escorted to the class. Or you can arrive a few minutes late after your class is seated and enter in role. Or the class may be working in groups or on a written assignment and you slip out momentarily to put on whatever simple costume is needed to become the new persona. Or if the costume change is slight, such as putting on a moustache or a type of hat or carrying a fan, you turn your back to the class for a moment, make the change, and upon facing the class again, you're now in role. At any rate, whichever means you choose, you are now decked in whatever paraphernalia you need to be the expected or unexpected guest. It's really quite effective!

But now that they're sitting in shock, what do I tell them to do?

Not a thing. Just go into role and become that character, and the rest is easy because they'll just fall into role with you. If at first a few don't follow your lead, just remain strictly in character and they'll soon go along with you.

This sounds like fun. Now what can I expect?

The first thing is SILENCE! The class is usually astonished—taken off guard—and in their state of shock, the natural response is quiet in the classroom, maybe followed by a little laughter once the shock wears off. Just begin your role as though it's very natural for you to be there, and they'll do their part in turn. Be spontaneous and they will be, too. It's amazing that even though they haven't been directed by the "regular teacher" as to what they are to do, they "get it" and perform exactly as you want them to.

But why am I doing all this? For the fun of it or just to startle the class?

Of course it's fun and the class is both surprised and fascinated, but you always have linguistic purposes for doing teacher-in-role, things you want the students to learn, experience, practice, or have

reinforced. So you don't carry out a teacher-in-role just for effect, but use it as an effective way to teach and communicate certain aspects of the target language or culture.

How about some examples of what you mean?

Sure. But let me begin by mentioning that I did this myself in a methods course I teach on Drama Techniques in Teaching Second Languages. In fact, the very first thing I did in starting the course last time was to enter the class and take on the role of a director who was casting a series of shows for the season, and I acted as though they were there to try out. With a microphone in hand, I talked to them about their experience, the large cast of characters I needed for the 15-week season, which coincided with the semester's length, and approached each one as I "instinctively" felt there was a special part that person should try out for. And naturally, throughout these interviews, my casting instincts were always right.

So you practice what you preach?

Or you could say I practice what I teach. At any rate, later in the semester, I introduced the concept of teacher-in-role and referred to my introduction to the course as an example of one they'd experienced. Then the teachers in the course each developed one to present to our class, one that was appropriate for their target language goals. You asked me for some examples. These are some of the roles they chose to do.

Examples of Roles

One person made a dramatic entrance as Madame Olga, a fortune teller with hoop earrings, lots of scarves, and some tea leaves and special cards. Amidst the laughter from the predictions she and the class members made, the future tense of regular and irregular verbs in French was practiced. A very pushy auctioneer wearing a long floral skirt and a huge straw hat and decked in bangles and beads, noisily crashed into the classroom. Carrying shopping bags filled with worthless merchandise, she proceeded to rave about the great value of each item in Spanish as the students, using play money—pesos in this case—bid on each one, paying outrageous prices for items as they practiced using numbers of all denominations.

And then, as I mentioned earlier, Judge Lance Ito made an appearance to teach ESL students about the American judicial system. Wearing his judge's robe, glasses, and beard, he acquainted the students with terms used in the courtroom, as well as the justice system here, and then questioned them about his highly publicized case. The intent was to have them compare the legal system in their countries with that of the United States.

I'm beginning to see that there are lots of possibilities for using teacher-in-role in the language class.

So true. All it takes is imagination, a spirit of adventure, a bit of daring, and the suggestion of a costume to begin. Of course, it takes careful planning and thoughtful decisions as to how to carry it out and what aspects of language to include. And it generates a lot of participation as well as mesmerizes students to pay attention to what's happening. A key remark teachers have made upon trying out a role in their own classrooms is that it converted any noisy classes into task-oriented students focusing directly on the lesson.

So the classroom can become anything you want it to be. The sky's the limit.

Even that's no limit as you can transport the class to an imaginary airplane as well as any other vehicle. For example, one teacher became a train conductor in our class and set the chairs up like a coach with an aisle in the middle. She was so realistic, you'd think she'd been calling out the stops and selling, collecting, and punching tickets, while conversing with passenger, for years.

What are some other roles teachers have taken?

Let's see. When their classes were learning about all kinds of food, they whisked them away to an elegant creperie or to the local deli, where they donned an apron, and with an order pad, saw that the class practiced ordering, using all sorts of language that they need. And then there was a police officer and a crossing guard, both of whom borrowed authentic items of apparel to wear. In their own classes, they had their students create large city maps for the classroom floor and traffic signs and had them practice such things as prepositions of location, stores and cultural places in town, directions for going places and safety rules. The whistle of the one and the stop sign of the other lent added special effects to the scene.

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We had a karate-kicking teacher among us who took us through the paces of a class a la TPR. This was energizing, cultural, and gave most of us a new experience as we learned to follow her commands. And toga-toting teachers appeared as famous Romans, prophets, or Shakespearean figures. On a holiday of the target culture, the teacher can dress appropriately to introduce teaching about the occasion. A natural for an ESL class is Halloween where there are all sorts of possibilities for costumes.

Teachers in role include Indira Gandhi, a waiter at a deli, Judge Lance Ito, a pushy auctioneer, artist Frida Kahlo, a congenial doctor, and a powerful psychic.

I can see how a cultural celebration would be more understandable this way.

Yes, because the students can then interact with the teacher and find out more about the occasion through questions and even active participation related to the holiday. Another thing that's effective is to come as a famous person people have heard of or are studying. Impersonations always have great appeal. Just ask comedians.

Sort of like history or current events coming to life?

Yes, but you can include any kind of celebrity or famous person, such as literary, artistic, entertainment, or political figures. We had Chinese revolutionist Mao Tse-Tung come to our class with his red flags and special jacket. By questioning him, the students found out a lot about his background and Chinese culture and history.

What a learning experience!

Yes, but wait till I tell you about the visit of Frida Kahlo! As you may know, she was a Mexican artist (married to muralist Diego Rivera) whose intense suffering from a childhood accident is expressed in her paintings. You should have seen her when she came to our class in a teacher-in-role done by a Spanish teacher. The teacher did such a convincing job of it that we all felt we were actually in the artist's presence.

Wish I'd been there. But did this teacher ever try it out with her own students?

Yes, she did. And her third-year Spanish students were very responsive. She told them they were having a visitor and she'd be right back. After thickening her eyebrows, donning a home-made wig and a peasant skirt, and pulling out a cane, she re-entered the classroom.

And here's what she had to say about the experience:

> "When I walked in, they laughed a little, but I kept on in my role and spoke to them in Spanish and told them I was there to answer their questions, discuss my art work, and see what they know. I was surprised that the students didn't think it was silly, but they went right along with it. I felt comfortable doing it and enjoyed it a lot. Actually, it was fun!"

And what did her students have to say about it?

It so happens that I asked teachers who teach various languages and age groups to get anonymously written feedback from their students about their reactions and feelings related to the visit of their "guest."

Here's what "Frida's" high school students had to say:

> "The presentation was very stimulating. It gave the teacher a chance to teach us in a more entertaining way."
>
> "Even though we knew it was our teacher, she never stopped acting as we asked her questions, which made it more realistic."
>
> "The costume and extensive knowledge about Frida were very helpful. Good job!"
>
> "I definitely would like other presentations like this as it gives students a chance to see and learn things first-hand. It makes the class exciting. "
>
> "My initial reaction to the Frida Kahlo visit was to laugh because I thought it was very funny, but as the class got involved, my reaction changed to gratitude. I realized the visit was very educational."
>
> "After the visit, I felt that I knew more about Frida Kahlo and my Spanish teacher."

Creating Interest

Although some people aren't interested in art, it's clear that hearing the stories and studying the works directly from the "creator" drum up appreciation for the work.

But what about younger students? Wouldn't they act up?

Just the opposite! With a borrowed stethoscope from the school nurse and a white coat from the science teacher, a French teacher, playing the role of a doctor with a sixth-grade class, said the students all wanted to take her role after seeing her do it. And they did. And with an eighth-grade class whose attention it was hard to get, another French teacher stated she had 100% attention the day she burst into class wearing a raincoat and, using a mike, announced she was a reporter whose paper wanted to know all about them and their lives. She further added that they were successful in learning a new formation for the future tense! Listen to some of her students' comments:

"It was really funny and really educational to learn about the future tense this way."

"I felt it was a good activity. The lesson helped me to be able to comprehend what the teacher was saying in French better."

"I felt important—that somebody wanted to know about me and what I like to do."

"I was amazed."

"I thought it was very amusing. It's a good way to keep students interested."

"I thought it was exciting and different because other teachers don't usually do that with us."

Interestingly, this teacher's supervisor observed her class that day and was amazed and favorably impressed.

You've proven your point about younger students. But what about mature ones? Adults? Foreign students? You know, ESL classes?

I think the inherent interest is universal—transcending age. It worked in my drama methods classes, which contained some students from other cultures. In fact, some of them in enacting a teacher-in-role themselves have been particularly outgoing and very much into their role. One Asian student was so convincing and humorous as a psychic that she was asked to do an encore.

As far as how they respond as learners, a college ESL teacher became Doubting Thomas and later, Tracy Travel, with her graduate students to find out for herself. Describing their reactions as she entered the classroom wearing a sheet, she told me: "From their faces you could see that they were shocked and amazed, and there was complete silence. It's hard for me to get their attention at the beginning of class because they're all talking to each other as they know each other so well. But that day, there was total silence, and they were looking at me and listening very, very, very attentively to what I was saying." And here are some of their comments:

"I was interested and enjoyed the acting. It helped us participate more in class."

"It is good because we can learn things from literature, culture, customs, religion, and see some things from everyday life."

"I'd like to learn English this way."

Taking Two Roles at Once

Let me tell you about another very imaginative way to use teacher-in-role and that is for the teacher to take two roles at once.

Two roles at once? You lost me.

Well, suppose you want to present two sides of an issue or compare differences between two cultures. The teacher becomes both sides or both cultures when speaking by donning an appropriate article of clothing, such as a hat, which symbolizes one country, and then changing to another typical item of apparel of the other culture in order to respond. So a crown can make you royalty; a straw hat with a red, white, and blue band—an American; or a beret—a French person.

Clever! And the two parties could even have debates! I can just picture the teacher changing the items of clothing back and forth a lot, especially if it's a controversy.

You've got the point! It's great for showing conflicts or differences between people in history, current events, literature, and any walk of life. Say during a presidential election here, the teacher could become both candidates in an ESL class to point out the differences between the parties. Or comparisons between dating customs in the U.S. and another country can be made by the teacher taking on the role of a person from each culture who shares his or her customs, while expressively reacting to those of the other culture. And the students have an important role in this, too—being very active in the interchange.

A teacher who became a crossing guard borrowed authentic items of apparel.

I'm convinced! But to what extent are teachers actually masquerading like this in their classes?

Once in a great while you may hear about a teacher who dresses up and performs like this on occasion. A few educators in different fields have been written up in articles as being exceptional teachers for doing so and have taken on such roles as Mark Twain, Joseph Politzer, Ronald Reagan, and filmdom's boxer "Rocky" (Coleman, 1983; Duncombe and Heikkinen, 1988; Jennes, 1980; McKeen, 1980). In the second language class, Dartmouth professor John Rassias is known for showing up in class decked out as 18th-century French philosopher Diderot or as a Chinese emperor (Bacon, 1993). One thing they report is that their students do not fall asleep during these performances!

It's important to realize that you don't have to be a Thespian or an award-winning star to do an effective teacher-in-role. In the second language class there are lots of opportunities to take on a role to demonstrate a point; create a scene, situation, or event; develop understanding of a person, time period, culture, or literary piece; and practice certain elements of the target language. It's much more fun meeting people than just reading about them on a page. Of course, you don't want to overdo it. But once you've successfully tried it and find out how well it's received, you'll find yourself thinking of potential return engagements as your students inquire, "Are we having another 'visitor' today?"

If I want to encourage other teachers to try a teacher-in-role, what should I tell them?

First ask them, "Are you willing to try a technique in your second language classes that: Captures the attention of students and holds it? Is dynamic? Is conducive to interacting in the target language? Gets positive responses from students? Puts a great deal of emphasis on drama? Relaxes students? Calls on student imagination? Emphasizes meaningful communication? Develops understanding of others? Offers experiences students may not have had before? Calls for natural language? Is stimulating for learners of all ages? Makes learning concrete? Helps students remember what is taught? Brings material to life? Allows students to express their feelings and opinions? Keeps students on the alert? And dispels discipline problems at that time?"

And if they answer "yes" to almost all of these questions, explain what you now know about teacher-in-role to them. Of course, you should try it yourself first before suggesting it to others.

That makes sense. But what should I think about when I plan a teacher-in-role?

Think about the material in general that you're going to be teaching. What is it you want to expand for students or have them practice? Are there some things that are normally not so interesting that you could make more appealing this way (such as the reporter who dealt with the future tense)? Are there some insights you'd like them to have about a fictional or actual person or celebrity, past or present? Have they been reading the work of an author they could meet? Or could they meet a character in the story to gain ideas about its message or its theme?

Have they been learning the vocabulary and types of responses for certain kinds of situations which could be put into use, such a going to a doctor? Although you could enter as a physician, of course, you could also become a medicine barker who's selling the cures for all ills. Think of an initial role that will be fun to experiment with.

Once I've chosen the content and my role, then what?

Know what you want to accomplish and decide how to carry it out. Be prepared with the knowl-

edge needed to be the person you're going to portray. Then decide on the costume and props you'll need. The barker could use a straw hat and bow tie and a small suitcase with pills or tonic.

Think about how you'll enter the class and your opening lines. Be spontaneous and stay in role. Use facial expressions and gestures with your hands and arms, and move around the room. Be animated and exaggerate, but don't overdo it. Most of all, let yourself enjoy it, because it's fun. It's perfectly acceptable for learning to be fun.

And I'm ready and willing. Thanks for the helpful hints. I just have to figure out who I want to be first. Say, I can be all the people I've ever wanted to be now! Let's see. I could be Joan of Arc or a famous rock star...or Hillary Clinton or even Bill...Pocahontas or Scarlet O'Hara...Queen Elizabeth or Princess Grace...Confucius or an astronaut...Maya Angelou or a great inventor...Dr. Spock or Sigmund Freud...Norman Rockwell or a super athlete...Julio Iglesias or Rosa Parks..or.. or....yes, yes, this is going to be fun!

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The Imagination: Where Roles and Images Reside

Dr. Robert Landy is Associate Professor and Director of the Drama Therapy Program at New York University. He became Editor-in-Chief of The Arts in Psychotherapy *in 1992.*

An Interview with Dr. Robert Landy

EDITORS' NOTE: For the past several years, Dr. Landy has been developing a taxonomy of roles and counter-roles based in Western dramatic literature. He has defined "role" as "the container of all the thoughts and feelings we have about ourselves and others in our social and imaginary worlds" (1990). Examples of these roles are the hero and villain, the victor and victim, the loving mother and the woman who destroys her children. He comes up with a total of 84 basic roles, which he presents in his book, *Persona and Performance: The Meaning of Role in Drama, Therapy and Everyday Life* and in the various articles listed in the bibliography. According to Landy, the roles represent different parts of the personality and can be used in helping people to understand the psychodynamics of themselves and their relationships with others. This interview was conducted on January 25, 1995 at New York University by Clyde Coreil. "JILL" is *The Journal of the Imagination in Language Learning*.

JILL: Can your taxonomy be used by ordinary teachers in creative writing activities, that is, asking students to write about specific roles and their counterparts ?

LANDY: That's a great question. Let me start this way. The whole idea of a taxonomy is concerned with this question: What is a human being? In some ways we are talking about a theory of personality. If it is true that a human being is a collection of roles, and that each role represents a discrete piece of the personality, then that might imply that the reading and writing of literature is a way of exploring roles, searching for roles, discovering roles, expanding roles. So that if I read a piece of literature, what appeals to me often is several roles within that piece that somehow correspond to something that's going on inside of me. I'm making an identification. I also find that kids—adolescents or even younger—respond to a piece of literature or film or television program because it speaks to something inside of them. I call that something "role."

So, back to your question about how the taxonomy can be useful in creative writing. One can access part of oneself, or one role that is more predominant than others. The task of a teacher would be to discover which roles in a student need to be seen, need to be heard. And then say, "Okay, let's write a piece about that role or write a piece "in role." I might be concerned with power/powerless issues. My student is worried about how strong he is vis-a-vis the other kids in his class. As a teacher, I say, "Okay, that's an issue that's going on in the school and/or class right now. Why don't you write about two characters—one of whom is very powerful and one whom is very powerless. We'll see what happens. Or, why don't half of you write from the point of view of the powerful one, and half, from the point of view of the powerless one. You can, for example, write a first-person narrative in role or about the role." Either way would be a very powerful way of using the taxonomy.

JILL: Can you make that more concrete with an example?

LANDY: Yes. The taxonomy—in the way I was just talking about—can also be a way of teaching "point of view." I remember an incident when I was a graduate student at the University of California. I had a friend who was teaching freshman composition. The lesson was about observation and writing from a specific point of view. He said to me, "You're a drama person. Would you be willing to stage some unexpected scene in the middle of class. The students would not be told about this beforehand. I'll ask them to write about it from their point of view."

Well, I was reading Lewis Carroll at the time, and I made up this story and planned something that I did not tell him about. I was going to be a person who had come to class expecting to hear a lecture about Lewis Carroll, and I would get very combative with him if he told me I was in the wrong

room. I decided to come in the role of the White Rabbit. I dressed up as a Victorian English professor. I had a little umbrella and a three-piece suit, and I was very high-strung. The qualities I brought in were those of the White Rabbit. I would look at my watch constantly and keep saying, "I'm late. I'm late." I came in and said, "Look, I'm here for the lecture about Lewis Carroll." Without batting an eye, he said this was a class in composition and that I must have the wrong room. I said, "No, no, no. I got this information from reliable sources a long time ago, and I know I'm right. You people are in the wrong room and must leave immediately. This is where the lecture on Lewis Carroll will be held." We argued vehemently about it, and I angrily stormed out of the room. And then he asked the students to write about that incident. He asked them if they were concerned or empathetic. Had they seen this as an honest mistake? Or did they think that this fellow was really a madman. Later, he told them that it had been staged. But it really made a point. I was using "role" to bring about a dramatic, conflictual episode that made a lasting impression on the persons involved. That's whimsical. Roles can also be used in a more directed way in creative writing.

JILL: For example...?

LANDY: For example, if a group of students read *Moby Dick*, the teacher might ask, "Who is Ismael?" After an exploration of Melville's character and perhaps the Biblical Ismael, students can be asked to write a story as if they were characters with Ismael-like qualities. Their stories could begin, "Call me Ismael."

JILL: Ismael embodies a role in your taxonomy. Briefly, what is that role?

LANDY: He could embody several roles—that's the beauty of the taxonomy. Right now, I would say that he is a lost one, unsure of his place in the universe. But he is also a searcher, a wanderer, on some sort of spiritual journey. As such, he embodies qualities of the hero.

JILL: How did your taxonomy come about?

LANDY: My taxonomy is based on a wide-ranging study of Western dramatic literature. I had a hunch that certain basic role types were repeated over and over again. I've read more than 600 plays, and I've seen probably a thousand in my life. I started to pick out roles of fool and hero and the like, and I began to see certain common qualities in them. People have written about literature in terms of character types. Freud, for instance, speaks at length about Oedipus and Moses as embodying universal psychological qualities. And Carol Pearson has written several books about archetypal characters. She does an analysis of female characters in Western literature, and she comes up with a sense of repeated role types. If that's true of literature, then it's also probably true of stories that people write. If we can make a connection between what's going on inside of people and the characters they read about or see in their external lives, then I think we have a powerful way of writing stories—interesting stories that come from a very personal place.

JILL: The holding up of such roles would seem to offer an opportunity for self-discovery.

LANDY: Yes, exactly. And it would also point to the fact that creative writing is a means of self-discovery, a clearer way of knowing who we are and what matters to us.

JILL: If I am not mistaken, the way you conceive roles is important in classical Greek drama.

LANDY: In classical Greek tragedy, ators played character types, such as king and queen, hero and villain, by means of wearing stylized masks and costumes. In classical Greek comedy, masks also represented various character types.

JILL: Is there any danger involved in making the students aware of the different roles that they are playing in life? Or is that just parallel to other aspects of self-discovery that go on in school all the time?

LANDY: I don't think there's any danger. I think that what should be pointed out to students, however, is the distinction between prototype, which is a universal figure of cultural significance, and a stereotype, which is a way of reducing timelessness to a current set of cultural prejudices. And I think that's just a point of definition. People tend to stereotype both themselves and others. That is, some people will need to be seen as greater or less than someone else in order to feel more secure. We stereotype because we need bad guys, villains, people who are stopping me from getting what I want. Now, ste-

reotypes are useful in looking at literature and also in completing writing assignments. We all have stereotypes and biases. It's very useful for all of us to know them, beause we are then able to apply our awareness of biases for particular ends—that is, to expose the prejudices of others and ourselves. However, when one plays with *stereotype* in the name of *prototype*, then that's not dangerous but problematic. Because often people mistake a stereotype for the genuine article, that is, the prototype. For example, some people with racist tendencies will write a story about the Blacks or the Mexicans or the Jews but actually think their stereotypes are prototypes.

On the other hand, I can write a story about racism from the point of view of being a racist, mindful of prototypes and of the distinction between my narrative voice and my beliefs in everyday life. I can do this knowing that in any culture, one needs to have villains and to villify others for certain reasons. The Nazi's had their villains, and many Mississippians in the 1950's had theirs. Everybody has his or her own personal villains. So, even though we need villains, we should be aware of how we villify others and what the effects of that are on them and us. Writing about a stereotype, that is, seeing someone as the dark figure in our lives is one thing. But *how* we write about it is also very important. We can see it as a need for villains, or a need for an explanation of why we, feeling inferior, need to feel superior. Stereotyping is a very human need which, in itself, is not immoral in that there seems to be an almost innate need to objectify and reduce. But writing or reading a piece that feeds into our own sense of prejudice—that kind of stereotyping can become problematic if we do it in a non-critical way. Using the taxonomy can be a way of understanding prototypes. Again, these can become stereotypes if we are not aware of how we are using or playing these roles.

JILL: Could you talk more about the difference between a prototype and a stereotype?

LANDY: A prototype is a Platonic ideal. It's either something that exists in heaven or inside of us. It's a way of understanding human nature. No human being can at any time grasp the totality of human nature. We can grasp pieces of it. And we need to slow down this complexity and understand how the parts have certain value. What writers do, especially creative writers, is try to capture parts of the human psyche and encapsulate them and give them meaning in terms of what I would call "prototypes." In most plays, you have a hero and a villain. There is some conflict created by these two prototypical characters. And even the most humanly drawn, complex characters have a certain "typical" quality to them. Even Hamlet, who is extraordinarily complex, is the typical ambivalent person. He's also many other things. The man of ambivalence becomes the man of action ultimately. And he's also the prototypical hero—a person on a search to find out something hidden from his awareness, and willing to risk what might happen as he proceeds along that path. So I'd say these are all prototypes: heroes, villains, fools, wise people, and so forth. And I think we all have a need for prototypes in order to understand certainly who we are and how the world works.

Watch the two most newsworthy events of yesterday on television or in the press—the trial of O. J. Simpson and the drama in the government of the United States as President Clinton gives his State of the Union Message to a pretty hostile Republican House that is controlled by this perhaps-fool, perhaps-genius Newt Gingrich. These are very interesting dramas that are being played out. The prosecution wants the public to believe that O.J. Simpson is a murderer and a dark, demonic figure. A type of bad guy. The defense wants the public to believe that the alleged victimizer is actually the victim, someone who has been framed, someone who is a fall guy—another Black unjustly accused. The reason why everybody is so excited by this trial is that the prototypes are in the spotlight. However, it is also exciting for people to subliminally indulge in stereotypical thinking—that is, that all Blacks are violent or all rich and famous people can buy justice, or all lawyers are manipulators of the truth.

JILL: You said a few minutes ago that ambivalence leads to action. At what point does that happen? When a decision is made?

LANDY: This is where the whole thing becomes more complex. Much of the criticism that I've received for presenting these ideas can be summarized easily: "Landy, you are skating too much on the thin ice of stereotyping. Types are types are types. When people begin to deal with types, they lose the

human being and are talking about abstractions." My response is that, in fact, although the taxonomy splits dramatic literature into 84 role types, the idea is that when these are played out, they exist in a paradoxical relationship to one another. So, in order to play the vicitimizer, one must have some sense of what it means to be a victim. In order to play the victim, one must have some sense of what it might be like to be the victimizer or victor—the one who has power and can rise above one's victimization.

All of these roles exist in a paradoxical relationship. When I talk about healthy functioning, I mean learning to live within one's role ambivalence, with the contradictions between the roles. So that if one claims to be pious and preaches a moral message, one can only be truly pious if one has confronted one's more negative impulses, more demonic features. In my drama therapy practice, when I treat individuals and groups, I don't simply try to help them overcome something, to resolve issues in their lives. I also try to get them to conceive of the issue in terms of the roles involved. I want to help them understand that to live comfortably, one must find a way to live within the ambivalence of roles. If people come into therapy because they feel very powerless, the question isn't how do I get them to resolve their feelings of victimization, but rather how do I help them find a way to live within the ambivalence of victim and victor.

JILL: The objectifying of one's situation that results from conceiving of it as a role—that would seem to provide a valuable breathing space. An individual would be acting out psychological roles that are not the same as the sense of the self. Is that part of it?

LANDY: Ah, well. In my theory there is no self. It's a very post-modern theory that as human beings, we are made up of complex, interactive paradoxical pieces. And that a concept of a whole, a monotheistic world, is gone. We are too fragmented and too scattered and too refracted to be just one thing. That's the point of view that works best for me as a drama therapist and a writer, one who comes from a literary background. If you read a very populated Dickens novel or a Shakespearean play, you find that the full world represented is peopled by many different types. If you were to put them all together, you might find a very complex structure, but not necessarily one thing, one personality, or one vision.

JILL: You just answered, I believe, my next question: Is the concept of the self a role?

LANDY: No. I wouldn't say that. Jung posits a self as one piece of his system. But no, the self is not a role. I find that the self is a problematic concept because people want to believe so desperately that a human being is one thing, or that there is a core self, a core piece of a human being. And I think at the bottom, at the depths of the human psyche is the potential to generate role as opposed to a self. Now some people might want to say, "Well, that's the self." And I would say, "Okay, if that's what you want to call it." But I just find that the term has been misused for so many thousands of years that it's become a meaningless term. And it doesn't help to understand the complexity and multiplicitous notions of human life I'm trying to present.

JILL: In my teaching, I certainly would welcome the presentation of your taxonomy. You've got 84...

LANDY: That's right—84 roles and a number of subtypes.

JILL: And next week it'll be 88. [Both chuckle.] Is there any possibility that at one point in your life you will make what could be used as a reader, with you discussing a role, then putting a passage from a play that captures the role.

LANDY: That's a nice idea. What I do in the full taxonomy—which appears in my book called *Persona and Performance: The Meaning of Role in Drama Therapy and Everyday Life*—is give for each role type at least three examples from dramatic literature. In some cases, I give many more. My three examples were chosen from different periods to show that there is continuity over history of the role type appearing. I don't necessarily provide a speech from each character that embodies the qualities of that type. However, it would be very easy to look at Cassandra's speech or Lady Macbeth's speech depending on what role type we're looking at. I mentioned Carol Pearson who wrote *The Hero Within*. She also co-authored a larger, more academic book analyzing many of the women characters in world literature from a feminist point of view. In that work, she gives actual speeches from novels, plays and so forth. But a reader based on the taxonomy—that would be fun to do. I would need to know more

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about the target audience and the specific purpose. We've been talking about purposes this morning: that is, using role in creative writing classes. I will give that some more thought and see if anybody is interested.

JILL: Why do you focus on dramatic literature instead of all literature.

Dr. Landy (center) helps students Erica Elie and Ken Brannon to explore roles.

LANDY: I could focus on several forms of literature—essays, stories, novels, poems. But I'm a drama therapist. One thing that I've been doing for a number of years is developing theory in drama therapy. My question is always how do the therapeutics come out of poetics, what is the basis of drama therapy in the art form. By reviewing drama, I was looking at the root source of drama therapy. My sense is that it would be just as easy if not easier to review novels or short stories—or even essays, although that might be a little far afield. A great inspiration for me was Vladimir Propp's book *The Morphology of the Folk Tale* in which he analyzes Russian folk tales, not necessarily according to role, although that's part of his morphology, but theme and structure were more important to him.

JILL: Do you think roles are universal, that is, characteristic of the basic human mind, or are different roles brought out in different cultures?

LANDY: Both. I think they are both universally and culturally determined. Some are more universal than others—heroes and villains, fools and wise people, victims and victimizers. But each culture has its own particular way of conceiving these roles, and perhaps has other roles that are not in my taxonomy. I have this fantasy of some day doing a taxonomy based on Eastern forms of theater. My sense is that that would be easier to do than Western theatre because Eastern theatre is more about types; it's a more presentational form whereas Western forms are less abstract, more psychologically realistic. Especially since the advent of Chekhov in the late nineteenth century and Stanislavsky in the early 20th. I have had a number of students from Asian countries such as Korea, China and Japan who read my work and say, "Well, this is so clear in Korean drama or Peking opera or Japanese Noh theatre." I'm not a scholar of those forms, so I can't precisely say how this is the case, but I am certain that there is a certain universality in the role types, and also that each culture would value certain aspects more than others.

JILL: "Revenge" in our culture is condemned, and in some cultures it is held up as an integral part of the code of honor. Does that present a problem for the theory of roles or is it an example of what you just said?

LANDY: From a universal point of view, I would say that all human beings have the potential to understand and play the role of the vengeful one, the avenger. But some cultures choose that role as more prominent than others. So that if you are in a Sicilian culture and someone killed your father, there is no question that you would avenge that death. Whereas if you are in high society in Minneapolis from a very Northern European culture, you would have other ways of revenging. But there would still be a revenge going on. You would bring in the police, hire a lawyer, etc. There's still the same dynamic that cuts through all cultures. If someone does something to you or your family, you respond in a certain, culturally determined way. The important fact is that you will respond. There's a part of you that wants to get back, wants justice.

JILL: There is, of course, an emphasis on multiculturalism in our society at the present. Coming from the South, I grew up under the influence of very negative features of what I guess would be called culture in a broad sense. For instance, racism. How do you distinguish between the positive and negative aspects of a given culture? Is this something you could deal with in a university class? Or is it too volatile at this time?

LANDY: I don't think it's too volatile, because when you think about it, a lot of published literature is about that very thing, about conflict within a culture. And there're two ways of viewing conflict. One is from an internal point of view, that is, about someone who is at war with himself or herself. Or in an

external way, that is someone who wants something that another person also wants. And this also holds true for cultural clashes. Southern writers like Truman Capote, Walker Percy, Carson McCullers, and Tennessee Williams write about issues of aggression and fear and faith and passion as they clash with passive and naive, lost and impotent tendencies in people. These issues stem from their cultural experiences. Any student from grade school up knows that literature is about conflict—between races and genders and points of view. But very few people have examined these conflicts in themselves. My sense is that the reading, writing and discussing of literature is one way of looking at those conflicts. And one way of approaching these sensitive issues is couching the issues in terms of the roles involved. Rather than blacks and whites, it could be good guys and bad guys at a very basic level. Why do we need bad guys? Why are they so attractive? Are there moral issues involved in the clash between good guys and bad guys? These issues are sensitive on the one hand, but on the other they're known by everyone of every age. Even young children. I have a three-year-old who says, "Daddy, that's a bad guy!" Now what does it mean to be a "bad" guy. In his terms it might mean something out of Power Rangers, which is the rage these days. But it also might be a figure out of his nightmares. Very young children have nightmares all the time in which there are dark figures. Now, who are these dark figures? Who will they become later? In certain cultures, they will become the Blacks, the Jews, the Arabs, the poor, the homeless. A culture will determine to some degree who those bad guys are. And to discuss these issues with students through their reading and writing seems to be completely relevant.

JILL: One makes value judgments on the grounds of which one condemns racism or the other "isms." What is the source of that ground? Is that a role?

LANDY: Yes. The role is that of the judge, the critic. And we all have a judge and a critic inside of us. We might value them differently depending on our culture or our particular personality dynamic. Some people's critic is very strong; and some people's judge is very strong. Therefore we see these people as very moralistic. There are a lot of teachers who tell their students that racism is bad. *My* judge tells me that *that's* only part of the story. My critical part tells me that—rather than saying that this is good and that is bad—why not say that there's a part of all of us that judges other people, and makes decisions on very limited information about a human being. There's a part of all of us that needs a bad guy to make us feel good. Taking that point of view, you will see how much richer that becomes than a teacher who takes a moralistic position and says that this is good and that is bad. Racism is bad. Sexism is bad. As decent human beings we know this, and there are laws that protect people from it. However, saying that doesn't address the issue that we all psychologically need to confront constantly: and that is, "What do we do with our bad feelings?" If someone acts badly or says something that we deem immoral, do we make them go away? Or do we repress them or force them someplace else so that they have the potential to act out violently at a later time? I think that's wrong. What needs to be done is to air these issues. They have to be given some kind of a safe form through, let's say, writing. Or some kind of safe enactment. If that happens, people will have less need to act out violently in real life. If I can write about my feelings of anger toward all those "undesireables" who kill people on subway trains, then I don't have to sit with these feelings.

One advantage of engaging in literary dialogues, readings, talking, thinking or writing is that we have a chance to express some of the more negative feelings that we learn from our culture, from our parents. It's that expression that seems to me most healthy, rather than some judge or moralistic figure saying that this is bad, and we shouldn't talk about it; that racism is bad and therefore it's a taboo subject. Of course, racism is bad, but what's worse is to deny a dialogue around one's racist feelings. And we all have them—every human being has them to some degree. Some of us are fortunate in that it's less dominant in our personality. That's great. But some of us have it more by virtue of having parents who behaved in a certain way, or growing up in a certain society at a certain point in history.

JILL: Suppose one of your students was a member of a subculture in the United States that valued the demonic, the antichrist, things that seem to me quite negative. And the guy gets up and he says, "I think that this is right. I have no problem with it. These are my values." What would you do?

LANDY: My feeling is that we all have stories to tell. Sometimes the stories are hard to listen to. But I try to create an atmosphere where people are allowed to tell the stories they need to tell. However, if a story is told that is extremely hateful and hurtful to other people's sensibilities, then I think that those other people or I as a teacher have a responsibility to say, "You have a right to tell your story, but in this particular forum it's hurtful. So therefore is there another way to present your story—maybe through writing. Maybe you'll write it for me, and I'll read it as a story. And when I tell a story—as dark and as demonic as it might be, that is not the whole of who I am. That's a part of me speaking. And maybe I have other stories. Or will have other stories, or had them in the past." So that I would try to get across the idea that a human being is full of many stories, is peopled with many roles. And what one presents at one time is a piece of that. It might be a big piece.

Now let me tell you another anecdote from the point of view of being a therapist. A number of years ago, I got a call from a lawyer who said that his son had joined a religious cult, one that I will not name here. I didn't know much about the group, although I had heard of it. My image of the group was that they were mainly underclass people who had hard lives but felt transformed having joined this particular group. Well, this particular lawyer was high-powered, white, upper-middle class. He basically hired me to deprogram his son. I told him that I didn't have experience in this area, but that I was a drama therapist and that I would be happy to meet with his son. The young man turned out to be about fourteen years old, a very nice person. We established a good working relationship. He trusted me; I enjoyed him. The mother and father were divorced. The father was living in the city, and the son was living with his mother in the suburbs. What the father hadn't told me was that the mother also was a member of the group. I met with the mother and the son. She was a tremendous anomaly: an affluent person, Jewish, well educated, yet spouting the rhetoric of a fundamentalist Christian group whose ranks seemed to me to be made up primarily of poor people of color. As I said, I didn't know what the group stood for, but the boy was educating me. I was completely accepting of whatever he said. As a therapist, I have to remain fairly neutral. I didn't judge it. Until one day, I realized that he was interested in getting me to not only hear his story, but to accept it as the truth.

One day, he brought me the group's bible that spoke of a time that's coming soon when there will be no death, no suffering. All people—that is, all believers—will turn into basically saints. Animals will give up their aggressive instincts, and there will be a paradise on earth. I stayed up half the night reading the book that he had given me. I was horrified. There were images of book-burning that reminded me of Nazism. At that time, I was a little younger and less experienced, and I made a grave error. The judge part of me became activated. I judged the group as a cult and a proselytizing, facist, mind-controlling organization. The instant I did that, I lost my client. I lost any ability to be useful to him as a therapist. And indeed within a short time, he was gone.

Earlier, I had called up his father and reassured him that his son was a good kid. I had said that he wasn't in deep trouble, that he was trying to work through a lot of problems, and that he, the father, and his son needed to talk more. I had facilitated a father-son dialogue. But once I judged the son, once I decided the group's teachings were demonic, he was lost to me. My ability to maintain a therapeutic bond was lost. I learned a lot from that. I never made that mistake again. I carry around wounds from that experience, because I know that I could have been a lot more helpful than I was. I don't know what has happened, but I do know that during the treatment, the father and son were talking more, and I hope that continued.

Anyway, I think the same thing is true in teaching. That when someone has a scary or demonic point of view, it needs to be expressed in some way. But within a boundary so that other people aren't hurt. Again, that boundary could be, "Okay, let's write about it. Let's you and I engage in a dialogue around it with the hope that maybe another voice could be found." People are on many journeys in their lives. Sometimes, people need to go to very dark places.

JILL: You found the ideas in the book negative.

LANDY: Right.

JILL: Do you think those ideas were negative for the son as an individual?

LANDY: That's the best question you could have asked. No, they weren't. They weren't at all negative for him. He needed those ideas. First, it bonded him with his mother. Second, it gave him a social group and a belief system that made sense to him at that time, and it helped him over the problems that he was going through. One of which was that he was learning disabled and having a very difficult time in keeping up with his classmates. The group told him, "You don't have to worry about your problems. You just have to be what God and the group wants you to be." They wanted him to drop out of school and become some kind of technician. His father was horrified. But that was the son's need at that time. He couldn't hack the regular academic routine. He needed some simple answers. He was sitting on a lot of complex feelings—broken family and his own sense of powerlessness. This group really empowered him and gave him a reason to exist.

JILL: Suppose that such a group had not only provided identity, comfort, warmth, companionship, and understanding, but had called for something extreme—like human sacrifice—how would you have dealt with that?

LANDY: If I felt that a client was engaged in some activity that was either illegal or immoral or hurtful of other people, then I would feel an obligation to do something about it. I would start by speaking to his parents and maybe teachers or school counselors. If his actions involved hurting children or stealing animals and killing them, I would need to consult with appropriate experts in adolescent treatment, social service and criminal justice.

JILL: But in terms of his adjustment to the world, you wouldn't have attempted to convince him that this is wrong.

LANDY: No, I wouldn't. Let's take another example, a more modest one. It's very popular at the moment for certain kids to pierce their bodies, which I find personally reprehensible. But if someone appeared in class with twenty earrings, I might not want to look that person in the eye, but I wouldn't judge it, at least publicly. I would be very careful about that. I had a good friend some years ago who was a minister in a parish in a part of the city known for its alternative lifestyles. Some people would appear in church wearing heavy leather, chains and tattoos. On the one hand it was colorful, but on the other hand it was problematic for more conventional people. But she was very open. They were welcome. I take the same attitude. Unless, again, I see that harm to others is involved.

JILL: And that is the ground.

LANDY: The ground is ultimately the boundary of harm to themselves or other people. Now what gives me the right to judge that? I don't know. I go by experience. I might not always be right. If someone is piercing their body, you might say that they are hurting themselves. But they might answer, "It's my body. This is what I need to do." In that case, I'd have to back down. It's different when others are being vicitmized or when an individual is banging his head against a wall.

JILL: Then you would not think in terms of roles but of immediate action.

LANDY: No, that's not quite right. It's also about roles. I would say that that person is in a very self destructive role at that point. Or a very violent role. One thing I should mention to you is that I'm about to engage in a major research study on violence. I personally need to understand what violent impulses are all about. And I even look at violent behavior in terms of roles. Self-destructive roles are very clear. I see them all the time in therapy, as well as everyday life. If someone is in a self-destructive role, I can take on a helper role or an intervening role to do something about it.

JILL: If you encounter such a person in a, say, sadist role...

LANDY: I'd want to stop it. I'd take on a police role, an authority role. Or I might take a friend or helper role, and say, "Look, this is not acceptable behavior." There are many roles I could take to try to stop it.

JILL: You're talking about your assuming other roles in dealing with clients.

LANDY: That's right. It's very interesting because in everyday life, in the face of extreme circumstances such as with a sadist or a cult, it's scary and difficult for me to know which role I should go into. Most people would just back off, just walk the other way—which is also a role, the escapist role.

Because most people can't deal with extreme behavior. But if you're a teacher or a therapist, you can't just run away. You have to do something. Or rather, you can run away, but it's more valuable to try to find a part of you that can respond in a more useful way.

JILL: Let's turn, for a moment, to the relation between sociodrama—which you have written about—and your taxonomy. Is the center of that relationship "viewpoint" or...

Erica Elie is torn between opposing forces represented by Jean Leavenworth (left) and Ken Brannon. Dr. Landy (center) directs the three students at New York University.

LANDY: Sociodrama is one of those large, catch-all phrases which means many things to many people. As a discipline, sociodrama was invented by Moreno, who also invented psychodrama. It represented a move into a kind of typology. Psychodrama is not concerned with role types. Basically, in psychodrama, one plays oneself in relationship to significant others in one's life, played by others in the group. So, if I have a problem with my mother, I cast someone in the group to play my mother. Not *the* mother as a type, but *my* mother. And I play myself in all my complexity. So the role of myself is not a prototypical role, but rather *me* as an individual.

Sociodrama is Moreno's way of saying, "Well, sometimes there are issues that are socially or culturally based that can be explored better in terms of types." Instead of Robert Landy and his mother, we'll have sons and mothers, or blacks and whites, or men and women. But Moreno never developed any system of roles. I conceive of sociodrama as a way of activating the system of roles in a systematic way to explore a particular social issue. I was involved in former New York City Mayor Ed Koch's "Reach for Speech" project a few years ago aimed at getting people to use oral communication skills better. Koch was looking for a unique approach, and to make a long story short, I suggested doing a sociodrama project where each community was to define an important social issue. We used ten junior and senior high schools in the New York metropolitan area. Let's say that in Brooklyn, the issue was teenage pregnancy. The teacher in the class would work with the students to determine some important characters in the community that work with this role. Those characters might be the pregnant girl, her boyfriend, the father and mother, the priest, the counselor, the teacher, etc. The students began to research actual people who were in these situations and how those people used language to address their problems. And they began to use the language that their role types would use. And in class, they developed a critical perspective, asking "How could this pregnant teenager use her language to communicate with people better and get her needs met more efficiently?"

For example, Susan, a high school student, has met several times with Nancy, a 15-year-old high school drop-out who is three months pregnant. In speaking with Nancy, Susan becomes aware of Nancy's inability to articulate her needs to those who might be in a position to help. In class, Susan plays the role of Nancy, speaking as she does, in relation to another student who role-plays Nancy's mother. The class analyzes Susan's enactment and discusses ways to alter her speech so that Nancy can be seen as a more powerful figure. In playing Nancy in an alternate way, Susan is able to convince the mother to help her seek emotional and medical support.

JILL: In very many schools and colleges in this country, there is at least the potential for discrimination against ESL students as well as teachers. ESL teachers are not really regarded as teachers by their faculty colleagues in history, chemistry, math, economics—you name it. This attitude is shared by students who are native speakers of English. Nor do these "regular" teachers and students have a better attitude toward ESL students, who are often, I think, considered as generally in some sort of "remedial" category. That attitude is seldom if ever brought up. What you have said about roles and sociodrama lead me to think it might be a good idea to focus on these negative mindsets. Or do you think it might be better to let sleeping dogs lie?

LANDY: There's a positive way and a negative way of looking at the problem. The positive way is that it's very powerful to be bilingual—to have two languages instead of one. Most Americans have only

one, especially twenty years after we've done away with most language requirements in our schools. We can explore why it's powerful to have two languages, and the ways it affects how one thinks about the world. So that in a class, if someone were bilingual in English and Russian—we might examine ways that one plays out certain emotional roles, what I call "affective" roles, in each language.

I'll give you an example. I lived in Portugal and I learned a little Portuguese. And we would watch these soap operas on television. Now the Portuguese culture is very different from the Brazilian culture, even though they both speak the same language. If you watch a Portuguese soap opera, everybody is very subdued. But if you would watch a Brazilian soap opera, everybody is extremely passionate. It was almost as if a different language was being spoken. Now, I found that fascinating. There seems to be a connection between culture, speech and behavior. I have some Russian students, and I find them extremely passionate. So when we're dealing with certain issues, a given role will be expressed far more passionately than by white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant Americans. These cultural and linguistic differences become very powerful. Instead of viewing a bilingual group in a negative light, it can be seen in a very positive light. And not only are these students learning a new language, they are learning a new culture or perhaps a second sub-culture. Maybe several sub-cultures. And that can be tremendously powerful because it increases one's knowledge base. It increases one's personality structure as one takes on a new role. The Russian immigrant is not losing the Russian language and culture, but rather, taking on yet another way of speaking and thinking and making sense of things.

JILL: And in several years, you will embody two cultures, and that is one source of your strength.

LANDY: So the notion of America as the great melting pot can also be seen as a stew in which each ingredient contributes to a whole. You can see the meat and the vegetables as each being absolutely necessary to the totality. Each has its own flavor. But if you cook it too much, it all becomes too much of the same thing. I think that's the real danger of bilingual, bicultural experience. Namely, that one will lose what one came in with, in the name of melting in this great pot. The issue is that of giving up one's identity. And that's what a lot of older immigrants have done. I think that the most successful families are the ones who can retain the old while taking on some of the new. I come from an East European Jewish family, and my parents' generation wanted to let go of the original language—they used a bit of Yiddish at home but none of the original languages of their parents—Polish, Russian, German. I try to come back to as much of those traditions as I can. I learned German and have spent time in the countries of my grandparents.

JILL: Let's talk a little about the imagination as such. As long as I don't think about it, the concept of the imagination seems fairly intact to me. But when I start thinking about a formal definition, everything begins to slip through my fingers. Do you have any thoughts on this?

LANDY: I've thought about this a lot. Let me speak about the imagination in the context of drama. I define drama as a process in which one is living simultaneously in two realities—the reality of the everyday and the reality of the imagination. So that I am both myself and not myself at the same time. When I'm in a play and I take on the role of Hamlet, I am Robert Landy and Hamlet at the same time. Robert Landy is grounded in the everyday; Hamlet is a fiction, something that has been created by an artist to embody certain universal truths and so forth. Hamlet is a pure work of the imagination. When I take on that role, I am living in that imaginary realm.

The reason I say that drama therapy is very powerful is because, as the actor in the play, I am able to participate in two realms at the same time. If I can live in those two realms, I can also move out of them. I can take off my costume and I am Robert Landy, and, as such, I can reflect upon Hamlet's dilemma. I can say, "Okay, Hamlet's in a tough situation. His father has recently died and something's rotten in the state of Denmark." And then I can say, "Now, there's something in my real life as Robert Landy that's similar to that," and by reflecting on the imaginative role of Hamlet, I have a way to make greater sense of what's going on in my real life. Maybe my father recently died. Maybe there are situations in my school that are horrible, and I can't really deal with them. Maybe I'm confused about my mother. The point is that for me, imagination is a realm, an actual place. It sounds ironic because it

seems to be the antithesis of reality. But it's not the antithesis of reality—it's *ANOTHER* reality. It's the reality of metaphor and art. It's an expressive reality. It's a place where we can go in our dreams and fantasies at any time. In an English literature classroom, or a writing classroom we can reflect upon that other reality and look at the way that writers and artists have expanded our understanding of everyday life through their flights of fancy, of imagination. And, like them, we can practice our journeys into the imagination. That's how I conceive of the imagination. It's the place where images reside. It's the home of images, the home of fiction. And that reality of fiction and images and metaphors is not of any lesser value than the reality of our daily lives. It might be of greater value. It's a very special place where all human beings can and do go at least every night of their lives and in most of their waking life too when they're not immediately directed on a task of everyday life.

JILL: Why does our culture insist on stifling the imagination?

LANDY: Because we live in a positivistic culture that believes in cause and effect, a culture that only values research that can prove in a scientifically verifiable way that this happens when you do that. Because we live in a culture that springs from the industrial revolution and values products and answers over process and questions. We are in a non-magical culture, a non-spiritual culture. That's why so many people turn to cults—searching for that lost spiritual quality. These are some of the known reasons. I think that there are more subtle reasons. Within families, you'll also find a denial of inner life. Many parents do not really care about the feelings of their children as much as the children getting on with their lives, not bothering them, going to good schools, doing better than they did. And we live in a culture that's completely caught up in the need to be economically successful. It's hard to find room for the more imaginative parts of existence. You'll notice that whenever legislators want to cut funds, the first sources they'll turn to are the arts. It's like saying, "Okay, I need to cut out one realm of existence, so let's cut out the imagination. Maybe it doesn't exist anyway. It's not that important." By doing that, one cuts out the very soul of the human being. And that's pretty dastardly work.

One of the most frightening images we all live with as we approach the 21st century is that of the terrorist—the one who can commit a senseless act of violence at any time, in any place—one who is so angry and powerless that the only way to be seen and acknowledged is through striking out at innocent people. What if those who, out of economic, political and psychological reasons, are potential terrorists could be allowed to express their feelings in imaginative play? In art? In dialogue with others of differing life circumstances? What if their imaginations were challenged and stimulated and acknowledged by parents and educators and therapists and politicians? Wouldn't we all rest easier? Wouldn't our everyday lives feel more hopeful and progressive?

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The Imagination and CD-ROM:
Multimedia Language & Culture Instruction

by Thomas J. Garza

Dr. Thomas J. Garza is assistant professor and language coordinator in the Department of Slavic Languages at the University of Texas at Austin. A presenter and teacher developer throughout the U.S.A., Russia and Eastern Europe, Dr. Garza has been developing interactive computer software for EFL and Russian since 1983.

Introduction

One need only observe our school or university students poised over a computer game to appreciate the effect of engaging the imagination in the very real world of sounds, colors, graphics and animation in cyberspace. As teachers, we rarely witness such enthusiasm working with a textbook or pre-recorded materials. Students already familiar with arcade and home versions of interactive video can move readily into the domain of computer-controlled CD-ROM. This multimedia environment is ideal for releasing the creative potential of the students' imagination from the confines of the static printed page. If we believe that the engagement of the imagination is critical in the process of gaining practical mastery of a foreign language, then the computer may indeed be the medium of preference in the coming years.

Monolith to Micro

More than a decade has passed since computer-assisted instruction began making substantial inroads into the realm of foreign language teaching and learning. No longer merely the domain of a few university-centered computer monoliths such as the PLATO system of the University of Illinois or Van Campen's Stanford project in Russian, the advent of the microcomputer in the late 1970s and especially the introduction of Apple Computer's Macintosh line in the early 80s brought the potential of using computer technology in the classrooms of our public schools. By 1985, Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) had become part of the working lexicon of many language educators, though by this time few had actually ventured to use, much less to create, materials for the digital medium in their classes. With educators and programmers in radically different pedagogical camps, it seemed that genuinely practical applications of computer technology in language teaching would amount to little more than the electronic workbooks that proliferated in this period.

In a striking attempt to make this pedagogical format more approachable to the average practitioner in schools and colleges, Ahmad, Corbett, Rogers and Sussex (1985) presented a no-nonsense jargon-free overview of computers in language teaching, providing a "much-needed guide for both practicing teachers and teachers in training who need to know what computers can and cannot do in language teaching." Unfortunately, in their attempt to demystify the machine and make the computer more approachable, the authors sometimes failed to give suitable prominence to the place of the student in a computer-assisted classroom choosing instead to focus on the teacher's role in classroom instruction. They contend, for example (p. 2):

> The computer is a tool, of itself incapable of action. It has no inborn wisdom, no mind of its own, no initiative, and no inherent ability to learn or teach. [...] The computer is a servant. Its role in education is that of a medium. Far from threatening the teacher' s position, it is totally dependent on the teacher in many ways: for example, it is unable to create educational materials without a human to direct it. All the linguistic material and instructions for its presentation must be specified by the teacher. It is the teacher, then who can make the computer assume various roles.

Instead of moving instructors toward exploring and exploiting the computer's potential to engage and realize the student's imagination during language learning, the authors chose to promote on a teacher-centered orientation of incorporating the technology, keeping the subject of instruction in the foreground of instruction, thus forsaking the many advantages that come from student-centered proficiency-oriented instruction (Omaggio Hadley 1993).

Since then, rapid and substantial developments in both the available hardware and software capabilities of affordable microcomputer equipment have pushed the medium into a new dimension of possibilities for use in teaching and learning languages. Most significant in this respect is the remarkable gain in video technology and multimedia capabilities for teaching applications. Many foreign language educators have in last decade written on the theoretical and practical advantages of incorporating video materials into the teaching of languages (Lavery 1983, Lonergan 1984, Allan 1985, Garza 1986, Altman 1989). Computer technology has made the integration of video— as well as audio, still photography, and scanned documents— a practical reality for the language teacher. By utilizing the technological potential of 1995 personal computers and employing student-centered tasking techniques, language and culture instruction can be much more relevant to the student and bring the learner closer to understanding and using the language in contexts that are more situationally authentic.

Virtual Reality or Just Plain Reality?

Thanks in large part to subsidies from Apple Computers through Project QUEST and course development grants from the College of Liberal Arts, the University of Texas at Austin is allowing faculty members to design and implement computer-based courseware in existing course offerings. The basic equipment used in this effort is the Power Macintosh with System 7.5. By utilizing existing authoring and creative software such as Aldus Premiere, Photoshop, and SuperCard, the computer becomes a powerful multimedia platform, allowing the materials developer to incorporate a variety of text, audio, photographs and video materials in a highly interactive instructional setting. Educators from a variety of academic disciplines, including the language arts, are involved in the creation of these innovative course materials in an attempt to bring individualized computer use to the front of innovative and effective instruction.

In addition, the technology of storing a wide variety of such language texts together with exercise material for exploiting the content of such authentic documents is readily available now to the teacher cum material designer in the form of compact discs, or CD-ROMs, which provide a storage/retrieval medium capable of holding literally thousands of bits and pieces of authentic samples of the target language and culture. The multimedia platform of the PowerMac permits the language teacher to create a variety of environments that can closely simulate authentic in situ language scenarios, and then store the sequences on CD-ROMs for use by individual students. This format gives the student a great deal of flexibility in manipulating the instructional material as he or she deems necessary in the course of language learning and acquisition. While the virtual reality worlds of being able physically to "enter" a street scene in Madrid or Moscow by putting on a VR helmet and strapping on a glove are still largely in the developmental phases, the multi-layered learning environments of CD-ROM technology is already quite a reality and presents the language teacher with tremendous possibilities in structuring the curriculum around individual learners. For many students of foreign languages, the possibility of getting to visit the country in which the language is spoken and interact firsthand with native speakers is often less than remote, physically or financially. Similarly, for learners of ESL in the US it is not always possible to move the classroom into the wide variety of settings and situations that we would like our students to experience as they gain functional proficiency in the language. In all of these situations, computer technology offers a reasonable substitute for or prelude to the in-country experience by tapping directly into the learner's imagination when he or she alone can manipulate the content, presentation and delivery of the material.

Authentic Sounds, Texts and Images

Earlier individualized programs for languages—even those which were billed as highly interactive on computer-controlled videodisc, such as "Montevidisco" for Spanish [revised 1992], "Klavier im Haus" for German [revised 1993], and "Dans la peau des Français" for French [1994] were all based on pre-produced and scripted video materials, presenting the student with "classroom language" in a

classroom setting. Thanks to recent innovations in Power Mac technology, authentic video, audio and print materials in the target language and from the target country can now easily be incorporated into any module of instruction and exploited for the development of linguistic, communicative, and cultural skills. Bits of the native speaker's world, realia such as tickets, menus, schedules, labels, etc., can easily be scanned and digitally stored as retrievable documents for incorporation into the larger context of a discreet language lesson or an entire course. Short, salient clips of films, commercials, documentaries and television programming can likewise be stored as QuickTime™ movies which can now become basic "texts" in language learning. Thus, the cyberspace world which the student can now explore through the computer is full of the sounds and images of the real world experience.

Dr. Garza (right) and a student work on a CD-ROM module that can be used to supplement traditional courses.

Russian on CD-ROM

A concrete example of implementing this CD-ROM technology in an on-going language class is taken from the intermediate and advanced Russian courses at the University. While the basic courses are standard four-skills, textbook-driven courses meeting three hours a week, students wishing to gain individualized practice in understanding and using the language situationally would select a CD-ROM module from those based on the curriculum of the Russian courses. A module might, for example, be based on a three-minute video clip taken from Russian television commemorating the birthday of Vladimir Vysotsky, the Russian bard known to virtually any living Russian citizen as singer, poet, actor, and philosopher on the Russian soul. In the video clip, the learner sees bits of Vysotsky's career, hears short interviews with family members and friends, and "visits" the famous gravesite in Moscow—all of this in the fully authentic context of a news feature in the very format and mode of presentation that a native Muscovite would have seen on the night of its broadcast.

The learner using this clip as a starting point for the individualized instruction module would be guided in viewing and reviewing the clip while performing a variety of primarily receptive tasks, focusing on the content and the performative aspects (pronunciation, intonation, diction, body language, etc.) and building a repertoire of language use in context. In this guided viewing phase of instruction, the non-linear nature of digitized video is exploited fully; the learner can move quickly and non-sequentially through various parts of the segment, focusing on individual isolated moments in the clip, either by choice when wishing to review or to skim for particular information, or by design to address essential materials that is prerequisite for progressing to the next level of instruction. As with any use of video-based technology, the material may be sped up or slowed down, or frozen on a single salient moment, as needed.

Branching Options for Personalized Study

The topic of the Vysotsky clip itself would be geared to the regular classroom presentation of a particular textbook theme—in the case of intermediate Russian, the corresponding topic and functions would be "Expressing Opinions about Music, Theater and Film." Students using the module, however, would be able to branch to any of several related topics of more specialized interest. Thus, for the Vysotsky clip and related instruction, a student of theater and drama could choose to work with print texts based on the Taganka Theater where Vysotsky often performed. Still within this branch, the student could choose to work through and explore a recording of Vysotsky's famous reading of Hamlet recorded in 1974, or watch a videotaped recording of a stage performance of "A Lone Soldier" from 1979, or sift through a stack of stills from various play performances with a native Russian voice-over narrating each photograph. All of these authentic materials are constantly resident in the CD, able to be called up as necessary either by the student or instructor in programming a particular sequence.

In the same way, a student of history or government might choose to focus on a close reading of materials gathered from Brezhnev-era documents and legal codes which hindered Vysotsky from per-

forming certain material. The function of expressing opinions remains unchanged for this related, but very different subject matter. Or, perhaps, the student of sociology might wish to listen to and examine the lyrics of the protest and prison songs of Vysotsky which are still performed in Russia to this day at post-glasnost era rallies for increased social reforms. Such a branching format encourages learner-centered exploration of not only the language material, but of the topic as it is relevant to the interests and specializations of the individual student.

In addition to the random branching capabilities of the compact disc format, the computer offers many other instructional enhancements that are available to the learner on demand. For example, the student of Russian is able to choose to have English subtitles or Russian captions appear on the screen to facilitate comprehension of the material (for a student of ESL, these subtitles would appear in the student' s native language). The option of adding an on-screen print modality to the presentation of the materials allows the program to appeal a variety of learning types and strategies which students use in a language learning situation.

For each CD-ROM module developed specifically for language and culture instruction, the student begins by first giving his/her level of instruction, beginning intermediate or advanced. By indicating the level of language instruction, the relevant set of exploitation exercises appropriate to the individual's level of proficiency are presented to the learner. In this way, by adjusting the level of the task given to the student, the same authentic texts may be used for different stages of training in the language, each time presenting the student new and increasingly challenging tasks, functions and performance options, thus closely simulating the process of making proficiency gains in an in-country setting.

The learner is then given preview, task-viewing, and post-viewing exercises to guide him/her through the video segment, as well as through any ancillary texts that occur during the branching sequence—all of which is the choice of the student. These materials would be available to the student both on-screen during presentation and practice, and in print form for later reference. The purpose of these exercises is two-fold: (1) to help the student work through the various layers of difficulty (such as vocabulary, cultural differences, historical references, etc.) lying between him or her and full comprehension of the segment, and (2) to bring the student to fully autonomous interaction with a text when confronted with it in a non-instructional setting. Such independence is attained by tutoring the student in employing strategies for decoding and demystifying authentic texts. The resulting module of texts and exercises is then recorded and stored in CD format to begin to compile a library of such materials. Many universities and educational facilities already possesses the capability of pressing CDs; as this process becomes more widespread in more applications, recording and pressing compact discs will become even more efficient and inexpensive. Currently, the cost of most CD-ROM products is between twenty and forty dollars, depending on the number of discs produced. Once a library of CD course modules has been compiled, students are able to use them in any computer facilities as part of the course requirements for all foreign language and ESL courses.

Objectives of CD-ROM Course Modules:

As part of a regular classroom curriculum for teaching language and culture, this type of courseware seeks to fulfill several objectives as material for independent, integrated study:

- To serve as a template for modules which could be used in other foreign language departments in colleges, schools, and institutions wanting to integrate video and other authentic media into interdisciplinary instruction across the curriculum.
- To help the student develop individualized learning strategies to approach and handle a variety of authentic (i.e., created by native speakers for native speakers) materials in the foreign language, including printed texts, video, audio, etc., to foster autonomous interaction in the language after the course is completed.
- To create, using multimedia technology, a more realistic interactive learning environment in for-

eign language or ESL courses for the student to experience, practice and understand the foreign language and culture using all authentic materials from the target language/culture, especially when the student cannot or may not travel to the country in which the language is spoken.

• To address a variety of interests from various diverse academic disciplines to make the subject matter related to the language more immediately relevant and applicable to the language student.

Conclusion

Foreign language or EFL learners using the modules in CD-ROM-supplemented courses would experience the benefits of increased proficiency in the target language and culture due to two factors: first, the increased exposure to authentic language in context; and second, the ancillary benefits of enhancing their own learning strategies by allow them to control instruction to a much greater degree than in a traditional teacher-centered classroom. Significantly, the template created in developing the Russian-specific modules at the University of Texas can be adapted and used in other schools or university foreign language departments wishing to incorporate video-based instructional materials, such as the widely-used "Destinos" video series for Spanish or "Deutsche Welle" television broadcasts in German. As a template, this course development project has significant benefits for other educational institutions, especially for students of two-year colleges and secondary schools, for whom travel to the target country during a regular study program may be unlikely. For in-service teacher development—especially in Russian—the program would be invaluable for increasing the linguistic and cultural competence of the instructors themselves. For graduate students or any students preparing for travel and study in Russia, the project materials would be ideal as pre-departure refresher training for universal comprehension and cultural "updating."

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Reel Talk: Movies, Values, and Language Acquisition

Kara Griffin is an instructor at Mukogawa Fort Wright Institute in Spokane, Washington. She has presented at language conferences on such topics as teaching values through movies, the experiential learning debate, and using E-Mail to teach interactive process writing. Kara's interest lies in developing techniques based on the Natural Approach.

By Kara Griffin

Why do people go to the movies? A poll of my low-intermediate language students on the first day of our course on Themes in American Film and Literature always provides the answer: "To enjoy!" Well, then, is watching a movie in a foreign language enjoyable? The resounding response: "No!"

Students arrive in my classroom overwhelmed at the thought of watching an entire movie in English. They express their frustration at not understanding the jokes, slang, colloquialisms, grammar, vocabulary, and rapid-fire speech. Imagine the anxiety that fills the classroom when I tell the students that they will be watching popular American movies, in their entirety, without pausing the films to explain the plot or language!

"Reel Talk" is Real Talk

For the most part, the language of movies reflects the language of real-life America. This is the language that students will hear on the streets, in the shops, in all facets of real life. As language learners, a great deal of ambiguity must be accepted outside of the classroom. In the classroom, therefore, it is useful to prepare students for this fact. As they cannot understand everything in the outside world, they cannot and will not understand everything in a movie, even if they are relatively fluent speakers. When given permission to relax and focus exclusively on values and key concepts, students let go of their inhibitions and begin to acquire language. We begin our focus on values with a simple reading that appears in our Institute's in-house publication, *American Studies Readings*:

What Makes A Film Great?

Movie critics believe that great films have a combination of good qualities, such as outstanding set design and costumes, superb acting, a well-written screenplay, and a setting that is either highly unusual or historically and culturally correct. If a movie has these qualities, critics often write, "This film is a must-see! Five stars! One of the greatest movies of our time!"

I used to believe that if a critic thought a film was great, then I would surely like the film. However, I have discovered that I don't always agree with the critics. Furthermore, I don't always agree with my friends or my family about which movies are good and which are not.

In *your* opinion, what makes a film great? Is it the set design, costumes, actors, direction, cinematography, screenplay, or setting? Is it a combination of those things? Or is it something more?

Psychologists say that a film is great when it reflects a person's own values. Our emotions show what we value. Do you value life? Then you might cry if someone dies of a terrible illness in a movie. Do you value harmony? Then you might be very uncomfortable when people shout at each other angrily in a movie. Do you want to find a wonderful boyfriend? Then your heart might beat strongly when you watch two young people fall in love. Movies, like good books, can help us to make decisions about how we should or should not live our lives. Great films help us discover our personal values. The next time you have strong feelings while watching a movie, think about what personal value inside of you that movie is reflecting. Movies can teach you a lot about yourself.

The point, of course, is that a film is great when it reflects one's personal values, which might be defined broadly as that which one considers of great worth and meaning. As Sinetar (1993) observes,

"Films can be consciousness-raising tools; their stories are personal mentors that lessen fear or illuminate the love, virtue, and wholeness already present in our lives" (p. 25). In addition, learners who search for values in movies are also (often subconsciously!) acquiring the language used to express their own values. Although video is often quite successfully manipulated in the classroom to teach discrete language points and individual skills, films can, on a wider scale, serve to empower and motivate students to acquire language in a natural, learner-centered way.

According to Tracy Terrell, "acquisition takes place under certain conditions. In a communication situation,

1. The focus of the interchange is on the message,
2. The acquirer must understand the message,
3. The acquirer must be in a low-anxiety situation" (Terrell, 1983, p. 272).

Teaching values awareness through movies readily achieves these objectives. Quality—or as the reading says, *great*—movies always contain a value message or messages; these messages are often universal in nature or are understood through character development; and movie watching is a low-stress activity if students are provided basic language support prior to watching the movie. This includes vocabulary and structures necessary for understanding the gist of dialogue which is crucial to the storyline.

Ms. Griffin (center) tells students that one key to enjoying films is in being aware of the values they contain.

At Mukogawa Fort Wright, we have used a number of popular films, including *Batman, Star Wars, The Wizard of Oz, Dead Poets Society, Miracle on 34th Street, Beauty and the Beast, Pretty Woman, The Long Walk Home, Mr. Baseball*, and *Mr. Mom*. We chose these movies because they generally appeal to our students. In other words, a value or values held by one or more characters is congruous with the students' own value(s). In addition, these movies reflect either cultural, family, historical, or universal values which serve to educate and to increase intercultural understanding. Of course, preparing students to watch a movie holistically (without frequently stopping the film) requires thorough preparation on the part of the teacher.

Pre-Viewing

Students perform several pre-viewing activities that present key characters, vocabulary, concepts, and values. These activities include:

1. A schema-building reading with pre- and post activities
2. A teacher-led discussion that covers
   - –Definitions of *value* (verb and noun) and *conflict of values*
   - –Types of values (cultural, family, historical, universal, personal)
   - –Ways we can identify others' values
   - –Grammatical and syntactic constructs that express emotions and values
3. A values-identification practice session using a scene from a popular movie
4. A glossary of key vocabulary from the film and a vocabulary-learning game
5. A brief description of key characters
6. One or more activities designed to help students reflect upon the value or values they will observe in a particular movie. For example, before we show *Dead Poets Society*, students do a categorization exercise to help them express their own values about education. On a set of cards are a few dozen value statements about students, teachers, schools, and education. In groups, students discuss the statements and arrange them according to whether they strongly agree, somewhat agree, or disagree.

Here are some of the value statements we use:

The purpose of education is to think for yourself.	*The purpose of education is to learn tradition and discipline.*	*The purpose of education is to give students knowledge.*

Lecturing and giving knowledge to students is the best way to teach.	*Teachers should encourage students to think for themselves.*	*Teachers should make sure students learn even when the students aren't interested.*
Students are responsible for their own learning. The teacher can't make them learn.	*Students should choose their own classes.*	*Students should study what their parents think is best for them.*
Students should voice their own opinions in class, even if others think that they are odd or unpopular.	*Students should never question or disagree with what a teacher says.*	*Students must always be loyal to their school.*

After the students categorize the statements, they identify statements that complement or contradict each other. This provides them with a foundation for understanding the many education-related conflicts in the movie (between teacher and teacher, student and student, teacher and student, parent and student, and administrator and teacher).

Viewing the Film

The teacher's mission should be to interfere as little as possible in the viewing process. Allow students to discover for themselves characters' personalities, values, conflicts, and choices. That said, it is often helpful for students (especially lower-level) to follow some kind of guided listening activity to aid in following the storyline. My colleagues, Brenda Balliet and Mary Lou Sproul, have developed a pen-and-paper activity in which the students, while they are watching the movie, glance at a chronological list of key dialogue from the film and write down which character is speaking and to whom he or she is speaking. The film should be stopped only when absolutely necessary, such as to introduce new characters.

Post-Viewing

Post-viewing activities provide students with a means to do some of the following:

- Analyze characters' personalities, emotions, behavior, and values.
- Explain the main characters' basic conflicts, the causes of conflict (difference in values), and the effects of conflict (outcomes).
- Compare characters' values with their own.
- Examine why the characters maintain these values. Are they a result of cultural or family background? Are they universal values? Are they contrary to the values of the society represented in the film?
- Discuss whether or not the film was great, according to student's personal reactions.
- Match characters' dialogue (language) with the value or belief underlying the language.

This matching can easily be done by preparing two sets of cards. On one set, write sentences from the movie that show characters' feelings and/or indicate their values. On the other set, write value statements that correspond with those feelings. Have students work individually or in small groups to solve the "puzzle." Here are a few examples from *The Wizard of Oz*:

Now I know I've got a heart, because it's breaking. -Tin Man	Love hurts.
The Wizard will fix everything! -Dorothy	Trust those in authority.
You've always had the power to go back to Kansas -Glinda	The power to change lies within ourselves.

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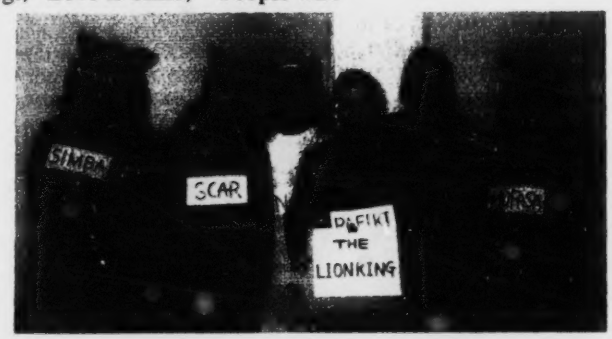
The Mini-movie

A fun post-viewing activity is the mini-movie. The teacher prepares a set of cards containing value statements. Each minimovie group of 4-6 students chooses a card. Groups prepare and present a five-minute scene reflecting the value statement they have chosen (e.g., "Love is blind," "People who are different are not accepted"). The mini-movie may be either student-scripted or an adaptation of a movie scene. In their mini-movie, the characters are not allowed to verbalize their value statement, but they must show the value through the storyline, emotional statements, and presentation. The audience watches the scene and guesses the group's value statement.



Ms. Griffin (second right) with students who have just dramatized values in a "minimovie."

Response

Often a student undergoes a dramatic change of opinion during the class:

Day 2: "My first impression is that films will not be amusements in this class...I was very confused because I have never heard of "value" of films...I was frustrated...This topic was very vague, so it is hard to understand...Do we actually need to study it?"

Day 8: *(Same student)* "Through this class, I'm gradually getting to be interested in the movies. By thinking of the value which the movie has, I can understand its conflict more. Anyway, I'm glad. Seeing [American] movie became one of my hobbies. I want to see more than 5 movies by the time I leave this school."

Procedures

If you are interested in developing a values-based movies curriculum, you may want to consider the following:

1. Choose a movie that will appeal to the interests of your students. Have students define their most important values. Find a movie that reflects those values. To help you assess your class' interests, you might want to play a values game (such as the board game *Life Stories*, published in 1991 by FNDI Limited Partnership), or practice identifying movie or literature characters' values by watching a film clip or reading a short story and discussing the students' reactions to the characters' values and choices.
2. Develop schema prior to showing the movie. Briefly review the setting and major characters; give a general overview of historical and cultural concepts that are essential to understanding the plot.
3. Prepare a glossary of key words from the movie, and have students get a feel for the words by playing a vocabulary-learning game such as *Pictionary* (Copyright 1993 by Pictionary, Inc., published by Western Publishing Co.) To play our version of the game, provide the students with a glossary of key vocabulary from the movie you are about to show. Have students, in small groups, choose words at random from the list and, on a piece of paper, illustrate their chosen word for other students in the group. The illustrator may not speak or use gestures. Other students in the group must guess which word is represented in the drawing. This game works for all kinds of words, and it can be delightful with idiomatic phrases!
4. Provide a guided listening exercise for students to follow throughout the movie. Include dialogue that expresses central characters' emotions and values as well as dialogue that helps students to follow the plot. You may add any dialogue that you wish the learners to become familiar with (colloquialisms, common expressions, etc.). *However, keep in mind that students don't need to understand all of the language to understand the important concepts! Attempt to make the experience as holistic as possible.*

5. Only stop the film when absolutely necessary. If you show a feature film over the course of several days, provide a brief review at the beginning of class before continuing the film.
6. Remind students that they don't need to understand everything—just the emotions, values, and conflict between key characters.
7. Allow adequate follow-up time. Most of all, students appreciate discussing their personal reactions to value-packed (or value-deficient) scenes in the film.

Diane Larsen-Freeman remarked in a 1994 conference plenary, "A teacher who is a manager of learning creates learning opportunities which focus student attention on the likely challenge." Focusing attention on values helps students embrace the challenge of watching movies outside of class, as a real-world leisure activity, with a sense of control and empowerment.

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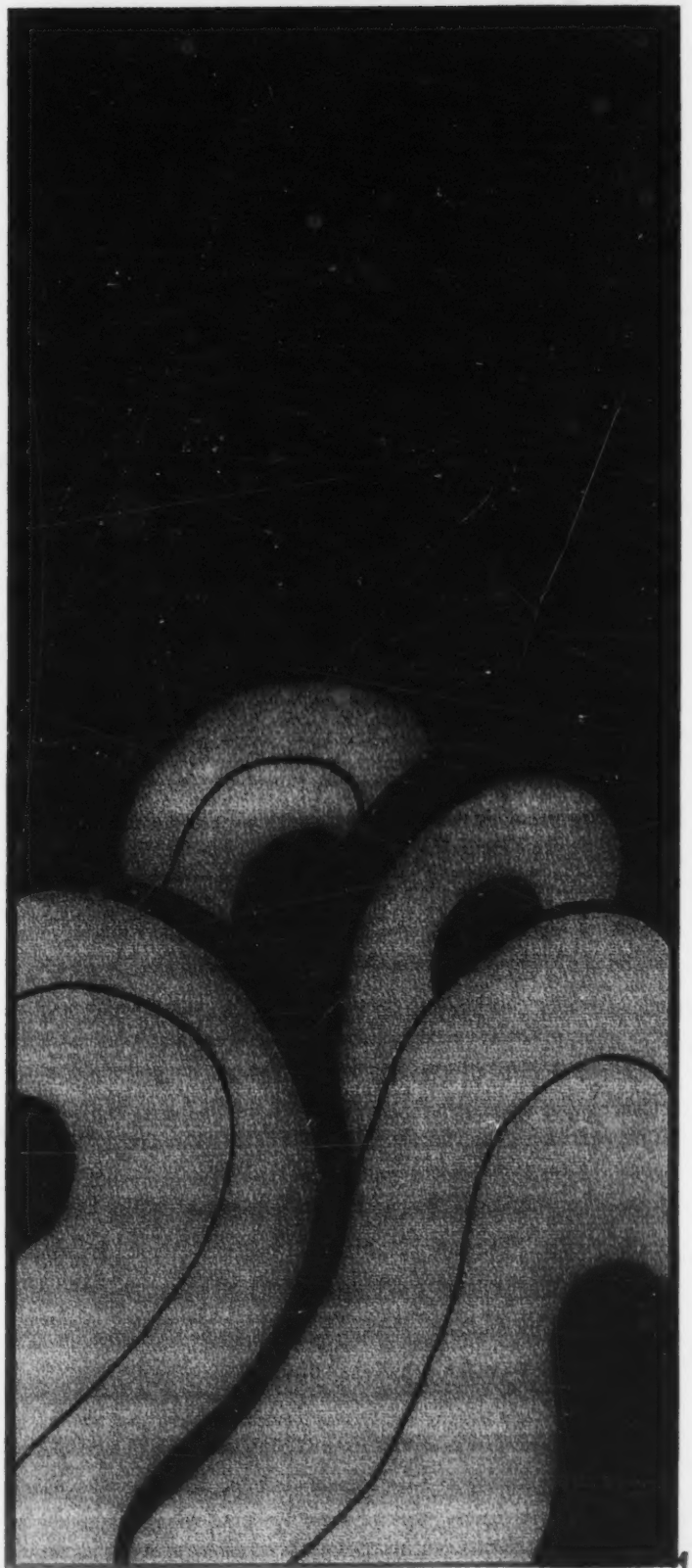

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Thematic Photographs: From Past Lives to Creative Writing

Dr. Larry G. Carter is Vice President for Academic Affairs at Jersey City State College. His education and training is in learning theory and instructional design, and he has teaching experience at the high school, community college and university level. In addition to photography, he is interested in the area of gender studies as an academic discipline and the changing roles of men in relation to changes brought about by the women's movement.

An Interview with Larry Carter

EDITORS' NOTE: "Past Lives," an exhibition of 21 photographs of old and ancient buildings by Dr. Carter, was held at the Courtney Gallery at Jersey City State College from January 19 to February 10, 1995. The following is about that show, the title of which refers to the persons who—in the photographer's imagination—might have lived and worked in those structures. The interview was conducted on February 8, 1995 at Jersey City State College by Clyde Coreil. "JILL" is *The Journal of the Imagination in Language Learning*.

JILL: I gave two of my classes the assignment of going to the show, looking at the photographs for at least ten minutes, and writing a reaction paper. Several of those papers reported essentially the same thing. They went in, looked at the photos for about thirty seconds and said to themselves, "What's this all about? Why did the teacher ask me to come here?" But they respected the ten-minute minimum, and looked more closely. When they did that, they started seeing the content and became quite interested and excited. I could tell from the papers that they were very eager to express what they found. I think that's a critical state in writing—the heightened wish to say something.

CARTER: Glad to hear it.

JILL: The most intriguing aspects of the show—for me as well as my students—was the theme and the title. At what point did it occur to you to pursue that theme? Before you had taken the first photograph?

CARTER: No. I started the photographs—of which I have taken several hundred—about three years ago. I live in Manhattan and spend a lot of time wandering around the City. I go to a lot of gallery openings, and generally, I like to walk. It's not unusual for me to walk seventy blocks to Soho, which has many galleries. During those walks, I would see buildings with the imprints of adjacent buildings which had since been torn down. I found the patterning and the light coming off these walls fascinating. Depending on the time of day, they were very different. One afternoon, I took my camera and began taking pictures of those walls. I suppose it's like many other involvements—once I had started, I got deeper and deeper into it. Now, I can't walk anywhere in the City without looking around and noticing these walls.

That's how this started. I didn't think of the idea of "past lives" until I did the ones in Greece. In the first black-and-white photos, I was interested mainly in what I could do technically with the camera. Then I happened to go to Delos, which is an island off Mykenos, an island that we would call a national park. It is as it was a very long time ago. There are no "developments." The Greek government had the good taste to prohibit anything like that—even forbidding restorations. Nothing has been done to it. They even limit the number of people who can visit for a maximum of four hours. No one can spend the night there. Right after the boat arrived, I noticed that everybody started walking in one direction. And I thought I would go the opposite way because if I wanted to take photographs, I might prefer having no one sitting around on the ruins and watching me. And when I did that, I ended up about halfway around the island, totally alone. Totally. With all of these ruins, which ranged from a wonderful old amphitheatre to the bases of houses. In many of them, the plumbing system was still intact and quite visible—small ditches lined with flat stones.

It was at that point that I thought about the people who lived there. It had become suddenly become real! This was a street, and these were the houses on the street. What about the people who had slept in those houses, walked over this plumbing every day of their lives to go to market, visit friends

and whatever? Some of the walls were much more elaborate than others. There were sections of the town where obviously the rich people lived: the houses had very nice marble columns and elaborate designs on the floors. Many of them were on the hills with beautiful views; others were in the valley with a limited view—apparently a poorer section of town.

I began thinking of what these spaces meant to these long-departed individuals. I found a few houses that still had plaster on the walls, and noticed that they were the ones with decorated floors. These were, I thought, the homes of the aristocracy, people of means. I thought of a contemporary person redoing his kitchen and the questions he or she might ask the designer and contractor—"What other floors have you done?" "What experience have you had in installing cabinets?" That sort of thing. I realized that it must have been the same with these ancient Greeks. I was, in a sense, in touch with them on a very quotidinal level. When I came back from Greece, and continued doing black-and-whites, I began thinking about past lives in New York. What were the people like who lived in those buildings?

JILL: Did you use your imagination to develop the details of these past lives?

CARTER: Yes. In my own mind. Certainly.

JILL: Did you give them names?

CARTER: No. I've never gone that far. I would imagine things like what that space meant to people. Working nine to five doesn't leave me with enough time to do this, but it would be very interesting to go to the planning commission and get some of the old street maps and figure out exactly what this and that building were. I made assumptions based on the shapes of these buildings and what's left around them. Many were almost certainly factories. Given when they were built, there were definitely not modern, air-conditioned, and centrally heated. These were really sweat-shops, and even in those neighborhoods, there are still companies that hire a lot of immigrant labor, a lot of low-paying jobs. The buildings that are missing are really no different from the ones that are still there.

JILL: It might be possible to do short stories about those people.

CARTER: I have not done that, but I think that these settings would certainly spark the mind of a writer.

JILL: There seems something very dramatic about these photographs. I wonder are you particularly interested in theatrical activities?

CARTER: No, not in participating in theatrical productions. People have asked me, "Why did you choose that one?" Possibly, the answer is that I have taken and chosen for the show more dramatic photographs. There are a couple that I selected because of the brick patterning and what happens to the wall after it's been exposed to the elements for so many years. The bricks fall away and you have these interesting and strange patterns. The photograph I used for the poster announcing the show is one in point. I'm interested in knowing what that building was. There were many five-floor walk-ups in the neighborhood, so I would say it was an immigrant population. That and the shape of the building are strong evidence that it was a church, which would have been very important to their spiritual and social life and their whole new life in America. So you see that I do fantasies around particular aspects of buildings. You can carry that one step further, and ask yourself what goes on in a church. People went there probably to pray and pour out all the bad things that happened to them. If I am right, the building represents a very personal part of their lives.

That type of realization led me to include the photographs from Egypt, which one reviewer didn't get. He said that if I were going to do that, why didn't I stick to New York and work with the walls with old billboards that had been painted with advertisements a long time ago.

There're two different issues here. The ones from Egypt are wall carvings and wall paintings that are vaguely similar in a way to the advertisements. But they were carved and painted scenes that had to do with their whole religion and belief structure. Those are paintings of the gods anointing the Pharaoh—giving an individual the power to be the high priest. So that's how I was looking at those old temple walls—as evidence of past lives. Drawing a parallel between the probable New York church

and the Egyptian temple might be stretching it, but that's what I was doing.

JILL: That kind of stretching seems very much at the center of the imagination. I think that somehow that's what my students were consciously or unconsciously reacting to. Ideas usually beget ideas. Have you thought of similar themes to develop in coming photographs?

Many of Dr. Carter's photographs are of buildings with imprints of adjacent buildings which have been torn down.

CARTER: Yes and no. I wanted to work on a set of photographs that would capture the Henry Moore sculptures and their reflections in the pools at Lincoln Center. It was a purely a technical problem. I spent a lot of time trying to get it right. I think I managed to do that, but in every single photograph there is at least one pidgeon sitting on top of the piece of sculpture. Which I didn't notice at first when I was concentrating on angles and light. I intended to go back and get the shots without the birds. But then I thought, "No. The pidgeons are interesting. Whether or not they annoyed me, they were there." So I began to look for sculptures around the City with pidgeons sitting on them or flying around. I have accumulated a lot of such pictures. That was similar to the photgraphs of the walls, which started as an attempt to solve a technical problem—how to get on film the shading of the bricks and their sharpness or fuzziness. It was only after I had a pile of pictures of walls and had looked at them carefully and had gone to Greece—it was only then that the idea of past lives began to organize the photos.

JILL: I shoot snapshots occasionally. I always think I have taken a marvellous photo of something or other. And then I get the prints, and they are anything but exceptional. The ideal image I thought I had captured is nowhere to be seen. Have you found that experience has helped you translate the ideal to film?

CARTER: I'm only an amateur, but taking a lot of photographs seems to have had some of that effect. Before my second trip to Egypt, I studied the shots I had taken there before. I decided what changes I would make in angle and time of day for shadows, that sort of thing. To make a long story short, when I got the prints back, I found that many of the original batch were better. And, I must admit, a lot of the new ones were also better. Experience had helped.

JILL: The real was closer to the ideal.

CARTER: Somewhat. If we begin speaking in those terms, we must factor in the role of chance, accident. Often, when I was working on the photographs in the show, I would get to the site and find that right where I wanted to place my camera, there was a parking lot with a fence and barbed wire strung along the top and ugly signs that said $8 per half hour. A ladder would seem like a solution, but it isn't. The parking lot owner would object and a crowd would gather and ruin concentration. So sometimes, the angles are less than perfect. But that's part of the challenge—to try to do the very best with what you've got.

JILL: With what chance and accident add to determination.

CARTER: Exactly.

JILL: After I saw your show and thought about its title, "Past Lives," it occurred to me that another assignment to students might have been, "Write a story about a person or persons who might have lived in one of these buildings." Can you think of any other type of classroom activity that might be generated by a viewing of the show?

CARTER: Different aspects of the photographs themselves might present an opportunity for students to talk about their own experiences. The three Egyptian walls might lead to considering the place of decoration in public and private buildings, and the relationship of decoration to the individual person living in a particular society at a particular time. The students might also be asked to describe the patterning and elements of design in such photographs. Normally, most of us tend to overlook these things and take them for granted.

Students might also be asked to discuss the construction of the building. My interest in photogra-

phy has always been architectural. How were the problems of construction solved? Look at the window frames and see what was done with the bricks that enables you to have a window in that wall. That's structural: how do you build a window without having the whole wall collapse? Look at the photos from Greece. How were the stones arranged to give stability to the walls? The covering material has fallen away and you can look at how the smaller stones and the larger stones are placed. It's amazing that they have remained in position for all these centuries. There's no cement or anything of the sort—just careful placement and balancing.

There are two photos in the show that are of houses built of mud bricks, which are still being used in construction in Egypt. The bottom part of the bricks is about two thousand years old. They lasted because they were covered with sand. The top part was reconstructed at some point in the past forty or fifty years. So that we are looking at a long and valuable tradition of architecture and construction that really worked. The housing is adequate and substantial. We tend to glance at it and say that that's sort of inferior, but it's not. The house that is beside the one in the photograph is even now very much and very comfortably lived in. On the day I was there, there was laundry hanging from a line out the window right next to this wonderful old temple. Every morning, the residents get up and see this beautifully preserved structure. So, in answer to your question, there are lots of things in these photographs that students can play with in conversation and writing.

JILL: I heard you mention once that you were interested in British fiction of the nineteenth century, partly because of the rich depiction of character. Is there any relation between that and the photographs in your show?

CARTER: Yes. The photographs—especially the black-and-white ones—strike me as particularly stark. I could be wrong, but when I think of British fiction, I think of starkness. When I was a kid in school, every so often we'd see some British film, such as a dramatized novel of Dickens. They were all black-and-white and very bare. Some of the New York buildings bring that general atmosphere to mind. And, come to think of it, the association might not be that far off because many of them are from the same period as that which Dickens writes about.

And that leads back to one of your earlier questions about dramatic effects in the photographs. I have color photographs of every one of the buildings that are in the show. I made different trips and used different films. It was always an interesting decision of whether to use a color or a black-and-white print for the exhibition. You gain something with the color, but you also lose something. Usually, you lose the dramatic effect if you choose the color, but you increase the warmth. Probably my favorite among the black-and-white prints is "71st Street and Amsterdam Ave.," which was used on the poster announcement. That version shows a very nice contrast in brickwork. The color version shows the different-colored bricks that were added at different times. So that you see different patternings in the two versions.

JILL: Let's say that you encountered a couple of English teachers who were captivated by the thematic aspect of the show. They say that they would like to do something similar but can't think of a theme. What would you say to them?

CARTER: I think that they would have to be honest about whatever their interest is. Some people have read the statement of purpose that I prepared for the show and said to me, "You are incredibly honest and straightforward." Possibly, they were referring to what they considered somewhat naive about my publicly acknowledging that I had created stories about the images in the photographs. Contemporary photographers are usually far more conservative. I thought to myself, "Well, how else could I be? I started working with texture and wound up looking at past lives. It's not a matter of honesty or dishonesty: that's what was happening in my head."

And if you're going to deal with a theme in a classroom, I think you should start out with what interests you and tell the students what you have in mind and not hide behind what you consider more elegant and sophisticated. If you do attempt something like this, you're going to spend a lot of time. It's not shooting a roll of film—it's shooting lots of rolls of film and reshooting and planning and

thinking about the whole thing. You've got to start out with something that's interesting to you, or you will find yourself abandoning the project. I would not advise anyone to begin such an activity with an arbitrary theme in mind, a theme that might seem trendy. Be honest—with yourself and with anyone involved. Be honest and be committed. When you start a project like this, you've got to let it lead you where it wants, and you've got to be willing to follow.

The lives of the people who had lived in these buildings suddenly became real to Dr. Carter.

JILL: And in your case that involved enlarging and carefully selecting the final prints and matting and fra :ng them as well as possible and hanging them for exhibition.

CARTER: Yes. All of those are very important.

JILL: Why? I mean I know that presentation is important, but why? If you attached the photographs to a bulletin board with thumb tacks, they'd be the same photographs.

CARTER: Let's talk about enlargement first. A lot of technical problems are involved but it boils down to this: When the photograph is presented in a gallery for viewing by another person, size is important. Some shots look fine in three-by-five or four-by-six inch prints, but they look very weak when they are enlarged to, say, ten-by-twelve inches. Sometimes, it's just the opposite. The red wall is my favorite among the colored photographs. I had real qualms about that one when it was smaller. I like it, but I thought that it would be far too red. I went ahead and enlarged it and it was wonderful. What had happened was that enlarging had spread the red and allowed the different shades to be far more easily seen. Similar principles are involved in selecting the proportion, colors and texture of the mats and the frames. It's not simply a matter of taking the photographs: it's a matter of preparing them for presentation to the viewer, the person who stands before them in the gallery. You must consider that perspective.

JILL: Do you do the darkroom work yourself?

CARTER: Computer technology has made that a whole new ball game. Twenty years ago, making a color enlargement was an enormously complicated undertaking. Now you simply put a negative into a copier-like machine with a viewing screen, drop some coins and the enlargement comes out the other side. There are about five photo shops in New York that have these machines at the present. There are usually people standing around, offering advice on cropping and contrast. It's a family-like atmosphere. It's easy and amazing. It gives an amateur like me far more control over the final product that I had ever dreamed possible before.

JILL: More and more, I see that the computer is becoming intricately involved in the exercise of imagination.

CARTER: Certainly.

JILL: I think it's very good for a high-ranking college administrator like yourself to do things like exhibit photographs and paintings and sculptures, to write and/or perform music, poetry and whatever. When I was in the gallery looking at the photographs, it occurred to me that there is a minimum of faculty and administrator participation in such activities in colleges and schools in this country. I had never thought of that before.

CARTER: When I decided to mount this show, I didn't want people saying, "Oh sure, he's the vice president. He's in charge of the gallery so he gets to use it." I was very sensitive about that issue. I was encouraged by Dorothy Harris [former Dean and Chair of the Art Department at Jersey City State College] and Denise Mullen [present Chair]. Denise is a photographer and a very straightforward person. There's no beating around the bush with her. I showed her the photographs I was thinking about using, and I asked her for her honest opinion. I told her that I didn't want to show something that would turn out to be embarrassing. If Denise had said that she didn't think I should show them, I wouldn't have done it. I was concerned, not about putting myself personally on the line, but about doing something

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inappropriate with my position.

Someone commented that it really took guts to mount the show. I said, "No. If I were twenty years of age and were looking for a career in photography, then it would take guts. But my career isn't in photography. I have a good job that I like very much and am very fortunate to have a lot of supportive colleagues. So it wasn't a matter of risk-taking from that perspective.

The other part of it that was very positive was that faculty need to see that I do other things, that I have interests in life in addition to working on budgets and attending meetings and whatever. And that relates to your question: I think that it's unfortunate when other teachers and administrators *don't* show other aspects of themselves, other parts of what makes them whole human beings.

JILL: It's a curious tradition—or lack of tradition. We're always encouraging students to express themselves by doing things outside the classroom, yet we seem to observe a prohibition against our own expressions of individuality. We tell each other—and the students—that role models are critically important. Yet, we shy far away from that very role.

CARTER: I think it's partially a result of colleges and universities having gotten larger. And there are exceptions to the pattern of non-involvement that you're referring to. There is, for example, on this campus, a certain amount of faculty participation in the production of plays. But in general, I think you're right. I think that students need to see their teachers and administrators in very different ways. And there is a lot of support by colleagues out there waiting to happen. At the opening of my exhibition, there was a tremendous atmosphere of joy and hapiness. The faculty and administrators here—and from other colleges—were happy for me, and it made me feel great! The photographs were well received, and the people were pleased to be there. It helped to bring together faculty and administrators—who are usually very separate.

JILL: In the long run, that might be the single, most important thing you've accomplished in this exhibition.

CARTER: Thanks. I hope I did that.

De-Mythicizing the Research Paper

by Barbara Guenther

Dr. Barbara Guenther is head of the Language Skills Program at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and an active presenter, writer and consultant in writing and the teaching of writing. She is working on a book to help writing teachers not trained in ESL deal with the increasing number of second-language speakers entering their classrooms.

I tried every euphemism I could think of—"a paper going beyond your own experience and opinions," "a paper combining your ideas with those of others"—anything but the dreaded phrase "research paper." But it didn't work. Years ago, dividing my third-graders into three reading groups, I had tried various names. I hadn't fooled anyone then either. Every child in the room knew that the Redbirds were the slow readers, just as, later, everyone in my college-level ESL class in writing knew that my cumbersome names for the next writing project meant research paper.

Native speakers of English taking their first college writing course feel some uneasiness about writing research papers. ESL students have even more reason to feel apprehensive about this assignment. International students are unlikely to have attended secondary schools that assigned research papers. Many permanent residents educated in U.S. high schools have also been particularly frustrated by the additional demands of language made by such a project: summarizing, paraphrasing, and integrating the ideas of others with their own thoughts instead of relying heavily on lengthy quotations.

In addition, both groups bring with them myths about the research paper, misconceptions that constrain them unnecessarily and add to the burden of an already difficult task. Because so many of my advanced ESL students used to drop the course as soon as the research paper was assigned (clearly in desperation, since they knew that they would have to repeat the course the following semester), I have come to realize the crucial importance of de-mythicizing the research paper. As a result, my students now write research papers which are enlivened by non-traditional sources and experimental forms

Myth 1: Research takes place only in libraries.

One myth that limits most student writers is a belief that research takes place only in libraries. Certainly our students need to learn how to use library sources, and, because many of them have never written a research paper before, we need to continue to design activities that will enable them to make full use of traditional academic sources. These activities need not consume a great amount of instructional time, however, especially because computers have made libraries so accessible to students. We need to spend time making students aware that a writer has a wealth of other sources as well: public records, surveys, polls, videos, and interviews, to name a few.

The power of going beyond the library was demonstrated most movingly to me by Aleksandr, a Ukranian student mourning the death, just a few months earlier, of his 14-year-old brother. Knowing of his need to write through his grief—a need reflected in every paper he had written during the first half of the semester—I suggested that he visit the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum, which was holding its annual exhibition of altars constructed for the celebration of the Day of the Dead. Knowing also of his dissatisfaction with the way death and grieving were dealt with in his own culture, I encouraged him to interview some of the Mexican students in our class, to discover their culture's very different attitude toward death.

The result was a paper that every teacher longs for, one in which the concept of writing as an act of discovery is manifest on every page. Aleksandr integrated personal expression, his experience at the museum, his interviews with two students, and library research. Never did he allow his paper to degenerate into a mere report. For instance, at the end of a largely factual and well documented paragraph describing the types of flowers often used to decorate Mexican graves, his unique angle—not only as a student in a writing class but also as an experienced photographer taking several advanced courses in that subject—emerges:

> ... Zespasuchitl are cultivated throughout the country, and are harvested for Dia de los Muertos [Day of the Dead]. Calla lilies and roses are used if they are available (Toor, p. 86). The strong vertical lines of the flowers pull one's eye up through the altar, and then higher toward the heavens.

Near the end of his paper, Aleksandr expresses his admiration of the beliefs which form the underpinning of this Mexican festival: "It seems extremely healthy to see life and death as two journeys belonging to one adventure, and with the family ties kept throughout all of it." His final paragraph consists of a moving description of the altar he constructed in his room to honor his dead brother, including photographs he had taken earlier, and this final sentence: "I watch and remember, and, I am watched and remembered." Had Aleksandr limited himself to his initial perception of what a reseach paper should be—a library exercise in gathering information— the loss would have been not only his but mine and that of all his other readers.

Aleksandr was certainly not the only student in my ESL class whose research paper was enriched by sources not found in the library. Writing about the contemporary painter Ansel Kiefer, Natalia remembered the contrast between her initial negative reaction to his work years ago and her later fascination with it. She wanted to talk to people with either a minimal or an unguided exposure to modern art. Sometimes a poll of fellow students is useful; in Natalia's case, however, the aesthetic taste of her peers, all students at an art school, was as sophisticated as her own. She recalled that I had said several times, "Find people to interview; if they're too busy to talk, they'll tell you, but usually they are flattered." Natalia was from Bolivia, and unlike many of her peers from Asia, she was not shy about interviewing strangers. Notebook in hand, she walked into the museum cafeteria, introduced herself to a likely looking group of women having lunch, and asked if she could interview them. ("You're right," she later told me; "they were flattered.") She found exactly what she needed: a group of people interested in art but not actually studying it, and people viewing Kiefer's work for the first time.

Even for native speakers, integrating ideas from several sources is the most cognitively demanding of the many tasks involved in writing a research paper. For students writing in a second (or third) language, it is even more difficult. Nevertheless, Natalia successfully integrated her own ideas—the dramatically contrasting reactions she had to Kiefer's art at two different points in her life—with the strongly negative views of the museum patrons she had interviewed. She provided additional complexity and sophistication by also integrating a library source: a theorist's discussion of the aesthetic differences between a first and second viewing of a work of art:

> That is the difference between artists and critics, and the people just going to museums to be entertained. The artists look twice, but not so for the general public. They think if a painting is not "lovely to look at," then is not good art. I can say that Kiefer's work is ugly and at the same time is art. To see it as art, the viewer must take a second look. Then will be evident its strength. As one critic writes, "The first viewing draws one away from meaning; the second puts one back in touch, if not with meaning, then with the energy which precedes knowledge." (West, p. 72)

The research papers of both Aleksandr and Natalia bear powerful testimony to the fact that writers working in a second language can go far beyond anyone's expectations, including their own. As they become free of constraining myths about the research paper, they begin to experience the truth of the etymology of the word *author*, from the verb signifying one who creates.

Creation excludes no source, of course. Students are not likely to overlook the fact that college and university libraries are usually the best places in town for finding printed information about a topic. At the same time, they need to be reminded not to overlook other sources close at hand: college classrooms, halls, and offices. My students have interviewed instructors on virtually every subject: from rainforests to Chicago's architecture, from the Big Bang to the Great Depression. They have interviewed administrators about admissions policies, managers of the college bookstore and cafeteria about working with student employees, and the college nurse about AIDS education. Going further

afield, students have designed polls and questionnaires for a variety of respondents: peers, family, and neighborhood merchants. Their field research has carried them not only to college offices and local grocery stores, but, in one case, for a paper on palmistry, to Madame Zeena on Clark Street for an actual reading.

Myth 2: There is only one correct form for a research paper.

A second myth that can prevent students from doing their best work is the belief that research papers must assume only one form. It is true that research papers for anthropology, literature, and biology classes are expected to look a great deal like the scholarly writing in those fields. At the same time, ESL students, with limited experience in this type of writing, must be helped to find their own voice and to let the content help lead them toward form. Later, writing reseach papers in a content-area course rather than a process course, they will not find it difficult to adjust to the expectations of a particular discipline.

Many of the writers in my advanced ESL composition classes choose not to experiment with form. Like any other choice, that decision serves a student well when it is a true decision. There is a subtle but powerful difference between writing in a traditional form because one feels there are no options, and, on the other hand, choosing to reject experimenting with form for any of a number of legitimate reasons, such as the topic itself, time constraints, and the limits of one's tolerance for change.

Research can be formed into a monologue.

Jin, a student from Korea, had a healthy tolerance for change. Having been impressed by the newly opened Asian galleries at the Art Institute, she chose to create a monologue, entitled "Travelling Far Eastern Asia in Fifty Minutes," for a guide to the galleries rather than use the form that would be expected when she took required art history courses the following year. Her playfulness with form, of course, did not preclude her using a number of references, citing them throughout her paper, and listing them in standard form at the end of the paper. Nor did it lower the cognitive level of the paper. As the passages below demonstrate, she not only pointed out the contrasts one would expect in a paper dealing with the art of three different countries; she also contrasted differences within Chinese art.

After drawing readers into the paper ("Walk to Gallery 105, which is at the very heart of the Asian installation ..."), Jin discusses some important works of Chinese art:

> Fix your eyes on the Buddhist sculpture who sits as if about to step off his throne into this world, and try to taste the smack of Chinese art. ...Gardner says Buddhist sculpture in China by the end of the seventh century had lost much of its own character. It had "borrowed from the sensuous carvings of India during the late sixth century A.D." (p. 440). But when Buddhist sculptures were carved in the eighth century, Chinese artists could apply their own "artistic language." They wanted to reflect the Chinese ideal of imperial Buddha. This included a much calmer face, "sometimes compassionate, sometimes austere eyes," very large ears with long and thick earlobes, and the mound on top of his head. (AIC brochure)

Throughout the paper, as Jin leads the reader from the Chinese to the Japanese and then the Korean galleries, her choice of form, a monologue, continues to animate the researched facts that she conveys. Like one of the best guides at the Art Institute, Jin's persona in this reseach paper is informative but not pedestrian, animated but not distracting:

> ...Can you feel a Japanese air in the Bodhisattva figure? If not, take a right turn from Gallery 103 to Gallery 107. There you will see Japanese prints. You can see what the independent Japanese character is exactly. For example, A Woman Holding a Comb, from the Edo period, is full of Japanese zest: an "extraordinary nuance in color and line." (AIC Brochure) Brilliant. Sumptuous. Vivid. Dramatic.
>
> Just less than ten steps takes you across the sea between Japan and Korea. As soon as you step into Korean art in Gallery 106, you can feel the extremely different atmosphere. Mute. Lyric. Grace. Noble.

Research can be formed into a script.

Gabriel, from Puerto Rico, also experimented with form. Writing of the greenhouse effect in a paper entitled "Waiting Could Be Deadly," he discussed the three catastrophes most alarming to environmental biologists. He conveyed the information in each of his three sections by first writing a script for a radio news alert:

> NEWSFLASH: We interrupt the traffic report to bring you this special bulletin on September 16, 2000, from radio WBBM-AM Chicago. The environmentalist group from Louisiana, Save Our Marshlands, continues to picket the White House...

After posing a question in bold print ("Why are marshlands, vegetation, and marine life threatened with extinction?"), he presented a lengthy and heavily researched section of explanation:

> The greenhouse effect takes place when a unique balance in nature is lost. By destroying this unique balance, global climates will change drastically over time. We will see wind patterns shift. Rain patterns shift. Storm patterns become more violent. Droughts get worse. Flooding more common. (Begley and Hager, p. 80)
>
> Flooding is more possible with higher sea levels vs. lower land levels. Marshlands could become completely submerged, and vegetation and marine life could be destroyed. (Titus, p. 21)

The three newsflash sections of Gabriel's paper clearly convey his engagement with the topic. Even the style of the three analytical sections is affected by his choice of form: the series of deliberate sentence fragments in the above passage, for instance, subtly reinforces the urgency of the preceding newsflash section.

Just as effectively rhetorical is his final page. Framed by two rhetorical questions are eight statements arranged in parallel form:

> Can we wait for conclusive evidence?
> Some say it's coincidence.
> Some say it is upon us.
> Some say, "We are taking the land from our children." (Wyncott, p. 89)
> Some say, "It's still not clear whether this is a CO_2 signal. The hard evidence isn't there." (Time, p. 57)
> What do you say?

Research can be formed into a letter.

"Build on your strengths," we are told. In writing their research papers as monologue/script, Jin and Gabriel did just that: they capitalized on voice. Other forms can accomplish this, of course; it is for the writer, guided by the content itself, to discover the best form for each piece of writing. I saw this dramatically demonstrated as Agnieszka, from Poland, wrote her research paper. The impetus for her paper was a published statement by the Surrealist artist Man Ray which so shocked her that she felt she had to respond directly to him. Though she knew he was no longer alive, she decided that the letter form would best allow her to convey her opinions and the researched information supporting them.

In the first part of her paper, after announcing her thesis, Agnieszka made some persuasive points based on the artist's life:

> Dear Man Ray:
>
> As I was skimming through a book on you, called *The Photographic Image*, I came upon a disturbing quote of yours. You say that "photography is not art" (Janus, p. 2). I am sorry to say that I strongly disagree with you.
>
> I'm not the only one who thinks your photos are art. Many Surrealist artists chose you as their photographer. They include Breton, Duchamp, Tanguy, Miro, and Dali (Penrose, p. 85).

From further sources I understand that you are quite a temperamental person. They say if part of your work is appreciated, you turn against it. This of course includes your photography (Melly, p. 100). In fact, the art critics and public basically recognize you as a photographer and ignore your paintings (Baum, p. 104). I can understand why you may be bitter. Unfortunately this caused you to stop taking photographs completely.

In the rest of the paper, Agnieszka analyzed five of Man Ray's photographs, yet even in that analytical section, she never let her readers forget that she was writing a letter:

The subject of the fourth photograph I have chosen is 35mm film. ...The film is set upon the contact paper. This leaves a ghost-like appearance of negative (the film) on positive (the paper). The interesting thing is that camera film is not used in the camera. Instead, it is the subject for the print instead of being the tool to develop a photograph. That's very clever, Mr. Ray.

Research can be formed into a journal.

Other students have found that the journal form best fits what they want to say. For instance, Pete, a Thai student, became interested in the personality of Vincent van Gogh after reading the artist's letters as well as a psychological study of van Gogh. Assuming the persona of the doctor who actually treated van Gogh near the end of his life, Pete wrote his research paper as a series of journal entries which explored the relationship between the artist's personality and his work:

January 7, 1889

I have received information through the patient about his past that is very important. Vincent's father, Reverend Theodore van Gogh, had a stillborn son. The next year a second son was born, who was the Vincent we know today. Vincent came into this world not to have his own identity, but to replace his dead brother (Nagera, p. 7).

January 20, 1889

The day before Vincent's attack on Gauguin, he finished two paintings of chairs. They are rich with symbolism of Vincent's illness, but they are painted with great care and control. They were painted by a great artist unaware of his subconscious, not by a madman. In Vincent's most recent letter to his brother Theo, he indicated that the empty chairs are a symbol of death (Nagera, p. 137). I noticed this sentence: "Empty chairs—there are many of them; later there will be more, and sooner or later there will be nothing but empty chairs in place of Herkomet, Luke, Fildes, Frank Hall, etc." (Letters, p. 352). From this symbolism, it seems that Vincent was planning to kill himself and Gauguin.

These students' use of non-traditional forms—monologue, script, letter, journal—in no way lowers the cognitive level of their papers. Nor does it prevent them from integrating a number of sources with their own ideas or from providing standard academic citations of those sources. The freedom to find forms that the writers feel best fit their ideas results in papers that are a delight to read.

"Delight is a delicate growth," wrote Thomas Hardy. Certainly, guiding my students through a project which initially caused them to recoil required a delicate circling around fears and misconceptions that could have prevented them from doing their best, most satisfying writing. Aleksandr, Natalia, Jin, Gabriel, Agnieszka, and Pete were all enabled to set aside the constraining myths about the research paper that they had brought with them to my class. In coming to see that research-based writing can be enriched by sources beyond the library and by forms other than the traditional academic form, they were able to become genuinely engaged with the full possibilities of their topics. The result is students who are not only experienced in writing a research paper but confident about doing so, for they have learned that writing can be both scholarly and creative.

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See it! Tell it! Write it!

Kathleen Mata has been teaching adult ESL at Chicago Commons for two years and has tutored in numerous university writing centers. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Writing/Literature with a minor in teaching at the University of California, San Diego. Currently, she is teaching fiction writing and finishing her MFA in Creative Writing with an emphasis on the Teaching of Writing at Columbia College in Chicago.

by Kathleen Mata

They wait for it. They dream about the moment when they will hear or read a sentence like, "The butterfly sat on the rim of the beer bottle," and automatically visualize an image. They will see black and orange wings fanning over a brown Coors bottle, instead of rolling their eyes back to try to match lexical items to a list of forgotten Spanish translations. As they struggle to untangle the long English sentences they read, writing seems absolutamente imposible! "I don't understand enough words! I can't speak! How can I write?"

Seeing in the Mind

People see the connection between listening comprehension and reading, but for some reason writing is on a far-off island that's completely surrounded by sharks. In truth, the four—listening, thinking, speaking, and writing—are inseparable: they all rely on seeing in the mind. When you listen to your grandmother tell a story or when you read a newspaper, you visualize in your head. Words are translated to raw images in your mind. The same is true for writing. People write what they see.

By "see" I mean when words in one language are no longer equal to a translation, but are the instantaneous communication of the actual object, feeling, or action. It is quite possible for students to see a movie in their heads as they write, rather than overlaying Spanish translations or English grammar rules. The more we can create activities that make it possible for students to see in English when they listen, think, read, and write, the quicker the obstacles to language acquisition will fall like dominos.

The Visual Approach

The "Story Workshop"™ approach to the teaching of writing developed by John Schultz mainly for fiction writers, has been successfully used at every level and in numerous settings, from kindergartens to professional offices. I believe the benefits of this approach adapted specifically for the ESL classroom are even greater since its basic principles are: "See it as you read, then storytell it as you see it, and finally, write it as you see it." Suddenly speech clears, writing pours onto the page, and confidence soars.

Reading Storyteller Style

How many times have you read a page and reached the end only to realize that you can't remember what you read! Your eyes obediently swept side to side, but you read without seeing it. This common phenomenon is especially true with ESL students. They are caught up in pronouncing the words correctly or nervously trying to translate each word separately instead of going after the whole idea. They will fall into the trap and read without seeing unless we establish and reinforce the working principle that the goal is not to translate words as fast as possible, but to see as you read.

The first thing any storyteller needs is audience, so the chairs are arranged in a semicircle. This is crucial so that everyone can see and hear everyone else, and students will have room to give gestures when they tell. It's important to choose a reading with a highly visual content, something with lots of gestures, imagery, voice, and sensory perceptions. I always read the first paragraph, modeling a voice that goes across the room and knows it has an audience. Before I pass the story off, I'll have a student pick someone across the semicircle to read it to. "Go ahead and get a good look at Maximina." This will remind the students that they are not just reading to themselves but to a specific person who has to be able to hear them and understand them.

A student is reading Sandra Cisneros' short story, "Eleven." In the middle of sentences, I coach her to retell the moment that was just read. "Melva, see the little girl push the red sweater to the corner of her desk so that half of it falls off like a waterfall." One of my hands pushes away an imaginary bunched-up sweater, while the fingers of my other hand trickle down like a waterfall. For a moment all eyes are on my hands, they are all seeing it. Melva goes back to the page with a clear sight of what is happening. Her voice becomes clearer as she trusts the image that the words are building together instead of fixating on each word separately.

After the reading, students clarify the story and vocabulary for each other with another round of "Recall,"™ where they retell parts of the story like storytellers. "The sweater stretches like jump rope." Melva's arms spread out in the semicircle as she holds up the imaginary saggy sweater by the sleeves. Students also do Recall after student work has been read. Authors are motivated to write more after they hear imagery from their own story recalled, retold, and (at the end) hear questions asked about their story from other students.

Opposite Word

Now that English voices and seeing in the mind are tuned, I'm ready to move to a deeper level and really get those imaginations churning. One exercise for intermediate to advanced groups is an opposite word round. "Awilda, give me a word any word."

"Church"

"Give it to everyone! Give it with your voice!"

"Church!"

"Everybody notice what the word 'church' makes you see!" The person sitting next to Awilda would have to give another word that she/he considers an opposite of "church," but only after they have established their own mental imagery triggered by "church."

"Disco." Awilda says.

I use the word "opposite" in a very general sense. I push for something unlike or different from "church" to widen the scope of their imaginations as much as possible. Avoid cliché opposites like black and white, chair and table. Take the class to a more abstract level. To make sure everyone's seeing "disco," the students can offer quick examples. The first time the Story Workshop™ approach is used, the teacher might want to model for the class and tell what she/he sees for "disco."

"Who's seeing something for disco? Leticia."

"There are too many lights. Too much music."

"Who's there?"

"Todo my family, my grandmother there too. It is the quinciñeros (fifteenth birthday) of my sister."

"Good. Who sees something different?" Four hands shoot up, eager to tell.

"My brother dancing on a table in the kitchen."

"How does he dance?"

"Like this." Aurelia shifts her hips in her seat and flails her arms.

"How do you say that?"

"I don't know."

"Just describe what you're doing."

"He is a snake."

"Now everyone, place what you see to the side temporarily. You can go back to it later. Maximina, what is a word opposite of disco?"

"Sewing machine."

The students see sights for "sewing machine." If a student's word is too close to the previous word or perhaps not as strong as they could give, ask them for another one.

In this part of the of the exercise, memories and ideas that are more abstract or more fictional are lifted from the cobwebs. Without this exercise, Aurelia may never have seen the sight of her brother

dancing on the table, or Leticia, the disco. If the students hadn't seen these images in their minds first, it would have been far more difficult for them to talk and write about them. Students realize that they can see, tell, and write about anything. When shy students hear others talking about topics and situations considered taboo in a formal classroom, suddenly they are given the "permission" to write about what they really want to. They see the reactions of interest they get from their peers in the semicircle when they tell. They begin to understand what the real meaning of writing is—transferring what you see into words so that another person can see what you see. No longer do they write for the teachers. They choose what interests them. They tell and write for their peers, as any storyteller would.

Students are encouraged to imagine a place and explore it in their minds.

Imagining a Place

During the Oral Reading™ and Recall,™ students were seeing and retelling sights from other writers and students. In the opposite word exercise, students created their own imagery and told it as if it was happening right before their eyes! Now, they are ready for the Story Workshop™ experience called "Take-A-Place."™

"Everybody take a place...a real place...an imagined place...a dark place...a place with a lot of light...a place you love to go to...a place you try to forget..." I say each set of contrasting suggestions slow and pause after each one, giving them time to search through it with their mind's eye. If you've been building a theme, you can encourage the students to see a dream, or a person they could write a letter to, or whatever. The key is that you want to throw out a few contrasting suggestions that are not too specific, but contrasting enough to make it plain that the choice of place is theirs to make, so long as they define it to themselves as "place."

After a few minutes I'll ask everyone to nod if they have a place. The first few times with lower levels you may even want to have students quickly name their place, just to make sure everyone is in the boat. "Now let your mind's eye explore the place. Notice what's taking your attention...people... objects...actions. Who is there? What objects are there? Listen for a far-away sound. And then listen for a close-in sound? Do you notice anything about the quality of light? Weather? What kinds of activity do you think people do there?" You are basically giving students ways to explore their place. Make sure you stay broad so you don't close anyone down.

A Class in Action

"Now, let your eye move around the place concentrating on the objects. When it is your turn, talk about the object that you are thinking of. 'Give' it with your voice to your classmates across the semicircle."

"Reyna, look right at the object and give it with your voice." Reyna's eyes search again in the belly of the semicircle. She pauses.

"Flower"

"Everyone see if there is a 'flower' in your place. If there is no 'flower' in your place, see it in another place." I nod my head, and the student sitting next to Reyna knows it's her turn to give her object.

"Bed"

"Everyone notice what 'bed' makes you see." Many times a student will see an object they don't know the English for. Milagros asked how to say "drain" in English; Aurelia asked for the translation for "stinger"; and Gladys wanted to know how to say "merry-go-round." Milagros, Gladys, and Aurelia would not have struggled to find words they didn't know how to say, if they weren't seeing those objects in their places.

"Everybody see what is happening in your place. Go to the moment of action. Who sees something?" Maximina raises her hand while her eyes look into the distance of the semicircle, still exploring what she is seeing.

"I in my bed at night. I looking out the window." Maximina's hand rises, pointing to an imaginary window. "I see a moon and a monster coming."

"What does the monster look like?"

"A elephant, big. He has, como se dice esos?" (How do you say this?) She curls her hand like a cat's paw and points to her finger nails.

"Claws?"

"Claws and eyes big and I cry for my mama." At first she stutters, second-guesses words and jumps around. Then the innate authority of the storyteller kicks in because she wants us to see it. Her speech becomes clearer. The initial confusion that crinkles on the foreheads of her classmates smooths out as they follow her moving hands. She uses the space around her to make gestures—the way storytellers have done throughout the ages. We all begin to see Maximina's floating monster.

But I know Maximina isn't telling everything she sees, so I ask like a spellbound child, letting my curiosity lead my questions. "What do you do? What does his face look like?" Each time her head turns back to the empty space between her hands as if she is double-checking his features. After she sees it, after she rebuilds the image with English words the audience can practically touch, Maximina is ready to write. I move to the next student, Milagros.

Ms. Mata (left), using dynamic visualization, harnesses the imagination in her writing class.

"I am stand in the bath. I drip blood but I no understand. I watch how the water wash away the blood in the drain." She twirls her finger down. "I think, O.K. it is gone, but my stomach hurts and I drip again." I went on to question her about how she feels and, as always, what does she do? What happens next?

The other students are sitting on the edges of their chairs, eager to tell. In a matter of seconds, Ernesto draws the class into his telling. His hands point to the ceiling, and then choke his own neck as he explains how he found an old man hanging by a rope. I question him, "What does he look like? What does he feel like?" After Ernesto tells us, he immediately picks up the paper and puts it on his lap, anxious to write.

Grammar and Mistakes

Reyna, a beginning student, can only shout out the objects she sees without putting them in the structure of a sentence. I give her a simple structure she can put all of her "seeing" in: "The ____ is/are ____." She builds a vivid sight of a rainforest. (With beginning students, sometimes I'll have them draw what they see first and then tell it with the aid of a picture they have labeled in English.) After everyone has told a bit of what they see, I set them free.

"Go to what is taking your attention. Write what you see. Write what you just told us about." That huge ravine between Spanish words and English words on paper is shredded. Milagros writes non-stop for fifteen minutes. Nobody is stuck thinking about what to write, or complaining. The classroom is practically humming with the swish of pencils and pens. I coach them: "Don't worry about the grammar. Guess if you're not sure how to spell or say a word." If they can't remember an English word at all, I encourage them to draw in a quick stick symbol for the word or, if it is complicated, write the Spanish and look it up later. This is the moment they really have to get their ideas down on paper the best way they can.

Occasionally a student holds up his or her paper to me and says, "Is this right?" They expect a grammar rule slapped on their paper. At these key moments, I only ask questions. "What do bees taste like?" I question Aurelia who is writing a jungle survival story. By asking a question about their story, you're showing them what's really important. If I were to remind them to tack on the "ing," change the "are" to "is," and explain why, I would take them away from the "place" where the story is developing in their minds. I've seen it happen many times. They immediately begin shifting through their paper

looking for more mistakes, and the story stops. The language actually comes easier if you let them make mistakes. Often students feel they have to write perfect English the first time: they freeze and write nothing because they "don't know how." Instead, coach them for something that's going to get them seeing again, writing again—like coaching for gesture. Later, after the initial gush of images and ideas has subsided, there will be plenty of time to go back and pick through grammar.

Writing Samples

Only after they have written a complete first draft in their conglomeration language do I correct it. I circle the spelling and grammar mistakes and put the students in groups to give them a chance to figure out what's wrong first and correct it. It takes us just as long to correct as it does for them to see their stories, talk them out, and write them. In the finished products, some sentences still sound a little awkward, but their ideas and images are flying.

Here are some parts of those stories:

I Will Never Forget

I remember the old man hanging. And I saw his tongue come out. I'll never forget that day. I had seen this man everyday when he was walking from wall to wall looking nervous at everybody. But the day when he killed himself I didn't see him. That day when I went to his room he was black. I knew he was dead because his tongue was red and blue. When I touched his body it was cold and stiff.

Ernesto Rodriguez

The Adolescent Nightmare

I watched how the water helped to get rid of the blood through the small hole in the bath tub. When I had the sensation of cleanliness, I put on new clothes. Then I went back to sleep, but I was in pain. Instead I had the discomfort of pain surrounding my pelvis again.

I really didn't know what to do because the blood reached out and made me feel embarrassed. I never heard, at that time, talks about tampax or anything else, never mind knowing how to use either. I guessed and managed myself to wear a whole wad of tissue paper. Then I heard everybody who entered the washroom scream for toilet paper. It was as if the toilet paper had feet to run away from them.

In the meantime I tried to catch some sleep, but the stress was awful! I continued thinking and worried more about the possibility of being pregnant, like the Virgin Mary. I grabbed that idea from the seminary at church.

Milagros Calderon

Rain Forest

The forest is beautiful.
The trunk is black.
The crocodile is brown.
The deer is brown.
The cobra is deadly.
The sun is red.
I am in the long vines.
The flowers are pink.
The pink sun is in the sky.
The grass is green.
The lizard is black.
The leaves and branches are red and blue.
I feel vines, branches and leaves all over my body
like strong donkey hair.

Reyna Mendoza

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My Monster

I'm looking out the window at the night. It is dark. I'm tired, so I go to bed. I don't want to close my eyes, but my eyes close slowly. In the middle of the night, I wake up. Far away I am listening to a noise. The noise is like buzzing bees. I wake up on the bed. I'm looking out the window. I see the full moon near my house, and I am scared. But I don't want to wake up my family. In a little while I see something big like an elephant in the air. He has an open hand and big nails like a cat. The eyes are big like a cow. The ears are long as a rabbit's ears. I'm afraid and I am crying.

Maximina Ruiz

None of these stories would have been so rich in detail, in sensory perception if the authors themselves didn't see them, tell them to an audience. Seeing and story-telling allows them to go far from typical themes, such as my country, family, and school. Instead, the students move to a moment of action, a moment where something is happening, a moment that will bring the audience to the edges of their chairs. That is the moment of writing.

*Special thanks to Lisa Berman and Betty Shiflett.

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Making a Song and Dance: The Musical Voice of Language

Paul Newham, who began his training as an actor at the Drama Centre in Britain, has directed for the professional theater and composed vocal music for live performance and television. He is currently researching a book that will overview the current use of voice and singing as a psychotherapeutic medium. Founder and director of the Voice Movement Therapy Center in London, Newmam is the author of The Singing Cure *published in 1993 by Random House and of analytic articles for a wide range of academic and popular publications.*

by Paul Newham

EDITORS' NOTE. Paul Newham might be described as charismatic, visionary and thoroughly dedicated to his pioneering work with the archetypal powers of voice. As a therapist, he has worked with a broad range of persons, including those classified as "handicapped" as well as professional singers and actors. Since its development and articulation by Newham ten years ago, *Voice Movement Therapy* has become internationally disseminated and respected. His work has been supported by leading figures in the clinical professions and funded by a number of bodies including The British Academy, the Arts Council of Great Britain, The Sobell Foundation and the Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust.
In the following article, Newham presents a broad review of the assumptions that have led through a devaluation of the imagination in learning to a welcome renewed interest in things creative.
Newham's address is P.O. Box 4218, London SE22OJE, England.

First There Was the Word

"In the beginning was the word," or was there?

In the early 1920's, while Sigmund Freud was developing the techniques which underpin the globally proliferate practice of modern psychotherapy, or the "talking cure," Otto Jesperson published a book on the origin and development of language in the human species in which he proposed with the naive and compassionate enthusiasm of his time:

> Men sang out their feelings long before they were able to speak their thoughts. But of course we must not imagine that "singing" means exactly the same thing here as in a modern concert hall. When we say that speech originated in song, what we mean is merely that our comparatively monotonous spoken language and our highly developed vocal music are differentiations of primitive utterances, which had more in them of the latter than of the former. These utterances were at first, like the singing of birds and the roaring of many animals and the crying and crooning of babies, exclamative, not communicative—that is, they came forth from an inner craving of the individual...
>
> They little suspected that in singing as nature prompted them, they were paving the way for a language capable of rendering minute shades of thought; just as they could not suspect that out of their coarse pictures of men and animals, there should one day grow an art enabling men of distant countries to speak to one another.[1]

Otto Jesperson had been influenced by a famous essay on the origin of music by Herbert Spencer which proposed that the function of "singing" in pre-verbal cultures was to release emotional energy, ventilating and dispensing the psychological excitation generated by the vital experiences of life; that is to say it was equivalent with what Freud described as "abreactive catharsis." Jesperson reiterated Spencer's notion endorsing the idea that "singing," like any other sort of play, is due to an overflow of energy, which is discharged through "vocal vivacity" and by which "exploits, deeds and experiences of every kind" are turned into sounds which provide the raw material out of which the earliest songs were born.[2] Ernst Kurth in his famous text *Musikpsychologie*, also written in the late nineteen twenties, says:

> In investigating the thematic roots of folksong, one soon comes upon psychological roots as well; among all races there appear certain recurrent, simple idioms that are really nothing but ultimate symbols of their vital consciousness: calls, chimes, cradlerhythms, work rhythms...shouts, hunting-calls...[3]

These acoustic symbols of "vital consciousness" which, we may speculate, were expressed through the spontaneous vocal sounds of early peoples, compare to the pre-verbal musical babblings of the infant. It is as though each new-born child in a matter of months traces the development of human beings played out over thousands of years. These sounds uttered during post-natal vocalisation contain a generic universality; they give voice to a level of human experience which constitutes a collective consciousness, a trans-cultural level of feeling. They do not "describe" or "represent" phenomena but "expose" an immediate response to experience; they are comparable to our imagined voices of primitive cultures which, in Jesperson's words, were "exclamative rather than communicative." Unlike the subsequent development of culture-specific languages which have generated a communication barrier between different peoples, these infantile trans-cultural and paralinguistic expressions of affect continue to infiltrate the oral code of adult humankind. In a study of the different kinds of non-verbal symbols which people use to enhance spoken language, the psychologists Ruesch and Kees state:

> Emotional expression appears most spectacularly when verbal communication fails altogether. The inability to use words occurs when people are overwhelmed by anger, anxiety, fear, shame. In spite of the incoherent nature of the things they say on such occasions, or the inability to speak at all, others can still understand the implications of their actions, human cries of fear and the kind of trembling associated with anxiety are correctly interpreted anywhere in the world, and the appearance of tears is universally regarded as a sign of tension release attributed to states of pleasure, pain, or grief. Hence the chief function of emotional expression is that of a universal and international emergency language.[4]

It is the sound of the voice which marks the birth of every new-born child; the life and soul of the baby depends upon its capacity to breathe, and the voice consists of nothing but this breath made audible by the vibration of the vocal cords.

Post-Natal Music

For the first three months, the baby cries only as an expression of hunger and distress, the melody of which rises and falls like a siren, and within weeks a mother will be able to distinguish her child's cry from that of many others without face-to-face contact. The mother has an innate aptitude, an inbuilt ability to detect the idiosyncratic cadences, the unique quality of rhythm and melody which her baby alone possesses. In addition to these tonal cries, the baby also makes vegetative sounds: coughs, dribbles, hiccups, lip-smacking, burps and wheezes which result from physiological processes.

At around three months old, a new quality of crying emerges which also has a rising and falling melody, but which usually has a slightly higher pitch range than the melody of distress. This is often identified as the emergence of the first pleasure cry and from this period on, the mother is able to differentiate between cries of hunger and cries of tiredness, between cries of physical discomfort and those of irritability, between cries of distress and those of pleasure. In short, the mother has the capacity to perceive in the child's melodic arrangement of pitch, a language which is as sophisticated as the baby's needs.

The emerging pleasure sounds contain acoustic properties which act as the precursor for the vowels that will later be used in words; and the differentiation between the melody of distress and that of pleasure has been identified as the baby's first step towards the acquisition of speech.[5] However, whereas the verbal infant will later organise such sounds according to the rules of the dictionary, the baby, not yet familiar with such a scheme, arranges them according to an intuitive, creative and innate sense of pitch, melody and rhythm in a fashion directly akin to the composition of music. This inborn, natal musical aptitude which a baby has, came to be the subject of serious research in the early 1960's when for example, the melodic patterns of pitch sung by a number of babies were plotted and their compositions analysed.[6] The results of ongoing subsequent research in this area points to a meaningful relationship between the breadth and complexity of a baby's melodious and musical crying and her proficiency in the later acquisition of speech. A limited pitch range in pre-verbal singing often occurs

in children who turn out to be "late developers" in the proficient employment of speech.[7] There are also a number of impending developmental or congenital conditions, such as Downs's Syndrome and Chromosome 5 deficiency, which can be detected in the melodic nature of early crying. More surprising than this is the evidence to suggest that the cry of a baby at risk from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) or "cot death" has certain acoustic characteristics, such as radical shifts of pitch, which may be recognisable enough to assist in preventing its occurrence.[8]

Newham works with clients to discover the universal acoustics of primal vocalization.

The Raw Material for Vowels

This instinctive musical arrangement of spontaneous vocal sounds, or "cooing," in which are recognisable the raw material for vowels and in which emotional predicament and perhaps even certain "abnormal" conditions can be detected, is followed between the ages of about 3 and 6 months by new kinds of sounds which form the raw material for consonants and is known as babbling. The "back consonants," such as "k" and "g" are formed by interrupting the trans-glottal air flow at the rear of the oral cavity and the "labial consonants," such as "b" and "m" require the flow to be interrupted at the front of the mouth. Whilst the vowels of "cooing" are arranged as melodic tones in harmonic relationship, the consonants are arranged as percussive beats in rhythmical relation. Both arrangements are spontaneous compositions following a phylogenetic, archetypal, trans-cultural collective score. The crying, cooing and babbling emerge purely instinctively and not as a result of any instruction from the mother or care-giver. Deaf babies cry, coo and babble just as hearing babies do.[9] It is one of the biological patterns of behaviour which the human species universally possesses and despite the unique quality to each baby's voice, there is a ubiquitous similarity to the crying, cooing and babbling of all babies that is recognisable world-wide. It is these innate universal qualities that give it a specific quality of humanity and which may be described as the "universal acoustics of primal vocalisation."

So too the perceptive faculty of the mother, which enables her to recognise the content of these cries, is a preprogrammed instinct. The mother does not need to take a course in a foreign language to comprehend the emotion or need communicated by her baby's crying: she acquires the aptitude for such an understanding as an integral aspect of her genetic predisposition. It is part of motherhood.

Thus we might say that between mother and baby there exists a phylogenetic and symbiotic communication in which the mother associates the various qualities of the baby's crying, cooing and babbling with certain needs, ideas and references. It is by way of her positive response to them that the baby receives affirmation of the communicative efficacy of the sounds which it makes, and the babbling eventually leads to mock conversations with the mother or care-giver which further serve to comfort and arouse.

The child absorbs a pleasure from these audible emissions, a pleasure that is thereafter forever craven for, a pleasure that is entirely oral. The mouth thus becomes the seat of sensory stimulation on two counts—it is the locus of contact with the nourishing breast and the centre of operation in the production of sound. But the mouth is not only one of the first centres of pleasure, it is also the original means by which a sense of power or control is achieved. The infant learns quickly that his needs are met in consequence to sound making, and the positive response to his crying is the first experience an infant has of command and influence. In the early part of the babbling stage the infant combines the consonants and vowels to make phonemes according only to the music of emotion and instinct. When listening to a child combine these phonemes in the pre-verbal stage, we are aware of his or her predicament not from "what" is uttered but by the "way in which" it is uttered. Likewise, the child responds not to the linguistic content of a parent's voice, but to its pitch and quality. Human communication with animals operates by this principle; a dog will respond to being scolded in French, German or in "gobbledygook," and the same may be said of the baby.

Language and the Loss of Primary Vocalisation

However, the child's success as a potential adult with full communicative faculty depends upon her ability to bring vocal sound-making into line with a specific man-made order. This order is structured according to laws by which the phonemes are combined to formulate words which society understands as the language particular to its culture. These words are acquired painstakingly, repetitiously, until all signs of the instinctive and emotive sound of the voice are subdued and incorporated by a linguistic code into which the child must contextualise the sounds in order to assert his or her rights within the social and linguistic context. The ability to use this code of language efficiently in differing social contexts has been called "communicative competence,"[10] and a prerequisite for this competence is the successful acquisition of an ability to combine phonemes into morphemes.

This transition from a universal musical tonality of babbling to the acquisition of the language specific to the child's culture is achieved by a process of education. The care-giver, in responding to the child, repeats and encourages those phonemes and combinations thereof which have a place in the words of her language and ignores or discourages those babbles which her particular language does not utilise. In behavioural psychology, when a pleasant environmental response results from a particular action or expression, it is said to exert a "reinforcement" whilst when a negative response or undesirable occurrence ensues, it is said to exert a "punishment." If the same action or expression is repeatedly punished, it will eventually diminish, and this is referred to as "extinction."[11] It is, according to the behaviourist model of language acquisition, from the process of reinforcement and punishment by the care-giver towards the child's sound-making that the first words appear, from which the child pieces together the spoken language of his or her culture and during which the unacceptable or unusable sounds become extinct. But where the original music making of the infant continues to exert its influence is in prosody and intonation, that is the stress with which phonemes, morphemes and words are pronounced.

Prosody after Melody

Without intonation our voices would be colourless and literally monotonous, that is mono-tonal, of one tone only. But, not only does intonation give melodic variation to our speech, it contributes to the message encoded. For example, compare the following two sentences of identical linguistic content but uttered with different intonations.

Susan kissed her mother and then Philip kissed her

Susan kissed her mother and then Philip kissed *her*.

The message encoded by the first sentence informs the listener that Philip kissed Susan's mother, but by shifting the pattern of intonation so as to stress the word "her," the second sentence implies that Philip kissed Susan. The alteration of stress is achieved by what a musician would call pitch variation. If you speak the sentences aloud in a deliberately slowed pace you will notice that in the first sentence, the word "her" will automatically be uttered on a single pitch identical to the that of the preceding word "kissed." However, in the second sentence you will probably raise the pitch at the beginning of the word "her" and slide downwards on a scale. This musical variation of linguistic content is called "prosody" and the way such melodic intonations influence the messages which language encodes is called "prosodic phonology."[12]

Prosody is a musical phenomenon and differs from phonology in that it is a characteristic which a baby is born with. Healthy neonates will compose melodic structures of rising and descending pitch using the full vocal range available to them from the moment they are born.[13] It is the application of these musical possibilities to phonemes, morphemes and words in order to encode specific meaning that is acquired through reinforcement, and it is the process of increasing proficiency in the use of words that we associate with the notion of progress, development and increasing intelligence within the Piagerian view of learning which still dominates our view of education.

From Expression to Abstraction

In Piaget's model of human development, the qualities which differentiate the later and so-called higher stages of infant growth from those accompanying the earlier years, pertain to the child's ability to construct and combine abstract symbols and comprehend their relationship to the phenomena therein represented. Language is one of these forms of abstract symbols; counting is another. Piaget's view of the child's aging is one which perceives a goal-directed movement towards ever increasing sophistication in the cognitive assimilation of logical ideas and relations.

Newham maintains that speech without music leads to language without heart.

In the early stages, a child is unable to conceive that an object exists when it is out of sight or hearing or when it cannot be touched, tasted or smelled. Her knowledge derives from the senses. However, the child gradually realises that objects continue to exist and exert an influence upon the world even when she cannot experience their presence sensibly; and it is this mental dawning which facilitates the linguistic process of naming things. By giving objects names they acquire a permanence, and the child is then able to process relationships between these linguistic symbols without ever having to come into sensory contact with the objects which they signify. The names become abstracted from the things.

One of the extreme examples of such abstract cognition is pure mathematics, where the numbers bear no relationship to objects or experience and yet can be mastered to guarantee a continuum of logic. For example, imagine that a book is held 500 millimetres from the ground and then let go. In mathematical terms, for the book to reach the floor it must first fall half the distance, bringing it 250 millimetres from its destination; then it must fall half that distance, bringing it 125 millimetres from the ground; and so on ad infinitum:

$$500 \times 1/2 = 250 \times 1/2 = 125 \times 1/2 = 62.5 \times 1/2 = 31.25 \times 1/2 = 15.625 \times 1/2 =$$
$$7.8125 \times 1/2 = 3.90625 \times 1/2 = 1.953125 \times 1/2 = 0.9765625 \times 1/2 =$$
$$0.48828125 \times 1/2 = 0.244140625$$

According to the formal operation of abstract mathematical symbols, the book would never reach the floor, but would spend forever travelling smaller and smaller distances. But of course anyone who has ever dropped a book knows that it does reach the earth and that the infinitesimal and infinite series of figures which the above calculations engender are not synonymous with the sensible experience of space. For Piaget however, "development," "progress" and "intelligence" mean a move away from such sensory experience towards proficiency in the organisation of data and ideas without experiential contact with the phenomena which they are supposed to represent. The concepts of adulthood and abstraction become equated as do childhood and sensible experience.

The most comprehensive critique and criticism of this overly logical aspect to Piaget's schema comes from Howard Gardner who points out that Piaget has "paid little heed to adult forms of cognition removed from the logic of science: there is scant consideration of the thought processes used by artists, writers, musicians, athletes, equally little information about processes of intuition, creativity or novel thinking."[14] Gardner points out that an adult's ability to comprehend, appreciate and "know" a phenomenon does not depend on the degree to which he cognitively understands the systematic logic of the underlying structures. It is not necessary to possess a cognitive comprehension of the underlying epistemes in order to develop a perceptive insight into a phenomenon; neither is such abstract proficiency necessary to creatively partake in a process with seemingly logical parameters, such as music.[15] A composer or a deeply insightful music buff may have as highly developed faculties relevant to the production and perception of music as an expert in score notation; but the former's approach is intuitive, creative and non-logical.

Significance of Non-Cognitive Apprehension

The implications of Gardner's thesis for children's education reminds us how little attention has

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been paid to the significance of this non-cognitive apprehension and perception in schools throughout the U.K., Europe and the U.S.A.[16] This is as apparent in music as it is in any other subject, where the emphasis, the criteria for future development and the accessibility of higher education and training has been linked more to the individual's cerebral understanding of the logical operations around which music supposedly coheres and by which its virtuosity of execution is supposedly preserved, than on his or her artistic perception of the extra-logical aspects of the human condition which music was in the first instance born to express. Fortunately this situation is slowly being dismantled as a result of contemporary research, much of which emanates from Project Zero, an interdisciplinary programme based at Harvard University, of which Gardner is part. The aim of the project is to investigate the non-logical process of artistic creativity and development, particularly in children, and many of the discoveries so far published by Project Zero provide a long overdue antidote to the logical legacy of Piaget.[17]

Teachers should feel free and creative in their own vocal playfulness, Newham says.

The "Wipe Out Effect"

A key figure in this research is Jeanne Bamberger, who drew the distinction between "formal" and "intuitive" understandings of music, and set up experiments with young children to ascertain the degree to which cognition of the formal structures inherent in music enhanced or depleted the instinctive ability to intuitively appreciate or create it. She discovered that the more proficient children became in musical notation, the less able they were to demonstrate the creative ability to sense and describe its mood and affect or recreate them through improvisation. Bamberger calls this the "wipe out effect," and her plea is for an increased respect for natural, non-formal, playful and spontaneous music-making in the school classroom and a move towards placing less emphasis on the formal system of abstract notation which a Piaget-orientated attitude tends to view as advanced.

This valuation of a non-formal relationship to the appreciation and creation of music does not entail teaching in the sense that an untaught child is already highly predisposed to intuitive creativity. Research contemporaneous with Bamberger's carried out by Helmut Moog,[18] Jay Dowling[19] and Lyle Davidson[20] has shown a widespread innate tendency to create music through the organisation of repetitive pitch patterns amongst very young infants. The increased ability in cognitive comprehension such as the reading and reproduction of musical notation may, therefore, be seen as much a process of extinguishing a natural skill as facilitating the acquisition of a new one.

Despite the work of those such as Gardner and Bamberger, the most widespread popular attitudes still emanate from a perspective which holds cognitive abstraction and scientific logic in far higher esteem than intuitive, experiential and sensible operations. Consequently, the process of transition from intuitive and spontaneous expression of affect to cognitive encoding of fixed linguistic symbols of meaning in the development of the infant is viewed as a progression from a primitive position to a more sophisticated one. Furthermore, this process of so-called advancement is mirrored in the likely process of development from primal tonal utterances to verbal language in the development of the human species. This process is also unfortunately and unjustifiably as synonymous with the notion of developmental progress in the human race as in the individual.

Equal Aspects of Expressive Potential

But rather than perceiving the relationship between these two different forms of expression in terms of teleological progress from one to the other, we would create a truer and less prejudicial picture of the human condition by considering them as two equally important aspects of our expressive potential. The prejudice inherent in a so-called progressive and developmental attitude to the relationship between these two forms of expression becomes particularly striking when working with people whose physical or mental condition renders sophisticated cognitive processes inaccessible. People who cannot speak or count, the so-called handicapped or impaired, but who continually express a vocal

dance of sounds which derive from their experience of the world are not communicating in a language which is less advanced or more primitive than those partial to linguistic discourse; they are speaking in a language which is based on a different formulation. We must recognise that the glorification of logical operations and the process of equating them with worth and proficiency represents a particularly insipid contribution to the general prejudice with which non-verbal people are viewed.

Another detrimental effect of the Piagerian developmental view is that it is too easy to forget the positive effect which early processes can have on later logical ones. This is particularly pertinent to language learning where the early, primitive and primarily right hemisphere orientated process of music making can enhance the process of language acquisition and memory which places demands upon the left hemisphere.

Music, Motion and Memory

Language teaching can be enhanced by drawing upon those components which constitute the innate predilection which we have to learn. It is therefore necessary to look beneath and beyond the process of language learning in the classroom to see what precedes it in the organisation of mental development. As I have argued, the backdrop, blue-print and initiating expressive faculties upon which linguistic or verbal activity are predicated consist of the phylogenetic spontaneous rhythmical arrangement of sound and silence which constitute the composition of music. Through the use of music in the teaching of language, it is therefore possible to bring to a cognitively challenging activity a dimension reminiscent of one of the most primary and primitive pleasures: that of singing.

Throughout Britain, singing in the classroom was, in the earlier part of the twentieth century, a highly popular activity with both teachers and pupils and was inseparable from another activity fortified with expediency as a teaching aid: playing. The intimate connection between singing and playing gained its most vibrant expression in the variety of singing games used throughout Europe by children in and out of school and which have been the subject of exquisite and scrutinising study by Iona and Peter Opie.[21]

The British Board of Education, in its 1905 recommendations for appropriate methods of teaching, strongly urged the use of French Nursery Rhymes, German Kindergarten Songs and Old English Singing Games as a way of teaching children how to play and thereby enjoy the process of schooling. So widespread was the use of rhyme, song and game that many publications full of invented singing games were produced, such as the once classic *Singing Games for Children* by Eleanor Farjeon (1919). Often the authors of such books travelled from school to school, village to village introducing them in practice.

One of the effects of singing is that it enables words, and therefore the objects or phenomena which they signify, to be remembered. This is particularly so when the singing is accompanied by movement. The simultaneity of motor action and vocalisation in the pre-verbal infant is revived through song and dance, where the attaching of particular tones and gestures to specific words sets them in a firm and easily retrievable form. The use of movement to assist in the retention of words is overtly visible when watching theatre actors work. Whilst the text is difficult to retain during the period of solitary line-learning, once the director has choreographed, or 'blocked' the basic exit, entrance, gestural and pedestrian movements of the players to which lines are designated, the activation of the moves assists the actor in remembering the lines which have been attached to them.

In the same way that motion aids linguistic memory, singing has the same effect. In experiments conducted at my own studio in London, both children and adults were shown to be significantly more able to remember a series of learned verbal constructs, ranging from lists of objects to poetic excerpts, when they were taught as simple songs rather than tuneless phrases.

The close relationship between song and memory is also observable amongst populations suffering from such kinds of mental disturbances which deplete the capacity for long term-memory. Those with senile dementia, for example, show a marked increased capacity for remembering the persons and events of a distant period when they hear a song from the relevant episode of their life. Songs provoke

the sentiment of reminiscence and in consequence provoke thoughtful cerebral reflection upon the subject which is being reminisced.

One of the most exquisite examples of the contributory role of song in the maintenance of memory is portrayed in Bruce Chatwin's description of the Australian Aborigines.[22] The native Australians, faced with the need to travel on foot across vast areas of barren wilderness with few stable land-marks, inherit and retain songs from their ancestors which describe the graphic features of the route and act therefore as an acoustic map, steering the journey-people along the right course. This use of song to prevent becoming lost in the wilderness has a psychological component recognisable in children world-wide who instinctively sing when scared, lost in the dark or faced with the trepidation of having to negotiate themselves through unfamiliar or threatening terrain. The mythical representative of this concept in Western Culture is Orpheus, the Greek hero who used the power of his singing to tame the untamable, not only Cerberus, the three-headed hound of the underworld; Charon, the ferry man, but also Hades himself.[23] The myth reminds us that, among other things, singing assuages fear and is rooted in the infantile experience of associating the mother's provision of relief from discomfort with the music of her vocal emissions. Though devoid of understandable linguistic content, these emissions are the signals by which the vulnerable infant is assured of her presence and attention.

The Use of Song to Use Language

The use of song to enhance and stimulate memory has direct use in language learning. The problem, however, is that there is unfortunately so much embarrassment, reticence and trepidation surrounding the use of song amongst teachers who have been made to feel inadequate and unmusical by the restricting logical abstractive educational approach which singing can help to alleviate. To reintroduce the magical and educational activity of singing and song-making into the classroom therefore necessitates the teaching of teachers to feel free and creative in their own vocal playfulness.

To this end I have offered a number of workshops to teachers, aiming to free up the singing voice and reanimate the natural capacity which we all have to create rhyme before reason, and song before speech, which I look forward to introducing at the conference organised by this *Journal* in 1996. The practical work which I teach is grounded in a set of practical principles which I have named Voice Movement Therapy, introduced and explained in my book *The Singing Cure*[24] and which will be expanded and deepened in the forthcoming book *Voice and Singing in Expressive Arts & Therapy*.[25] The exercises, games and techniques which underpin Voice Movement Therapy draw out the natural rhyme-making and music-making capacity for which every human being has as an innate but often suppressed propensity; reminding teachers of the naive and creative source from which so many children, as yet unhampered by overly logical processes, are often able to produce whilst at play. Voice Movement Therapy and the teaching practices I have developed for teachers and therapists constitute an essentially methodological way of uncovering the fundamental art of singing as an emotive, psychological, artistic and intuitive process which has been caused to starve through our attention being diverted to the often monstrously overpowering dogma of speech. Though we all need to speak in order to communicate, we also need to sing and dance in order to express; for speech without music, and motion without dance is a curse which leads to language without heart.

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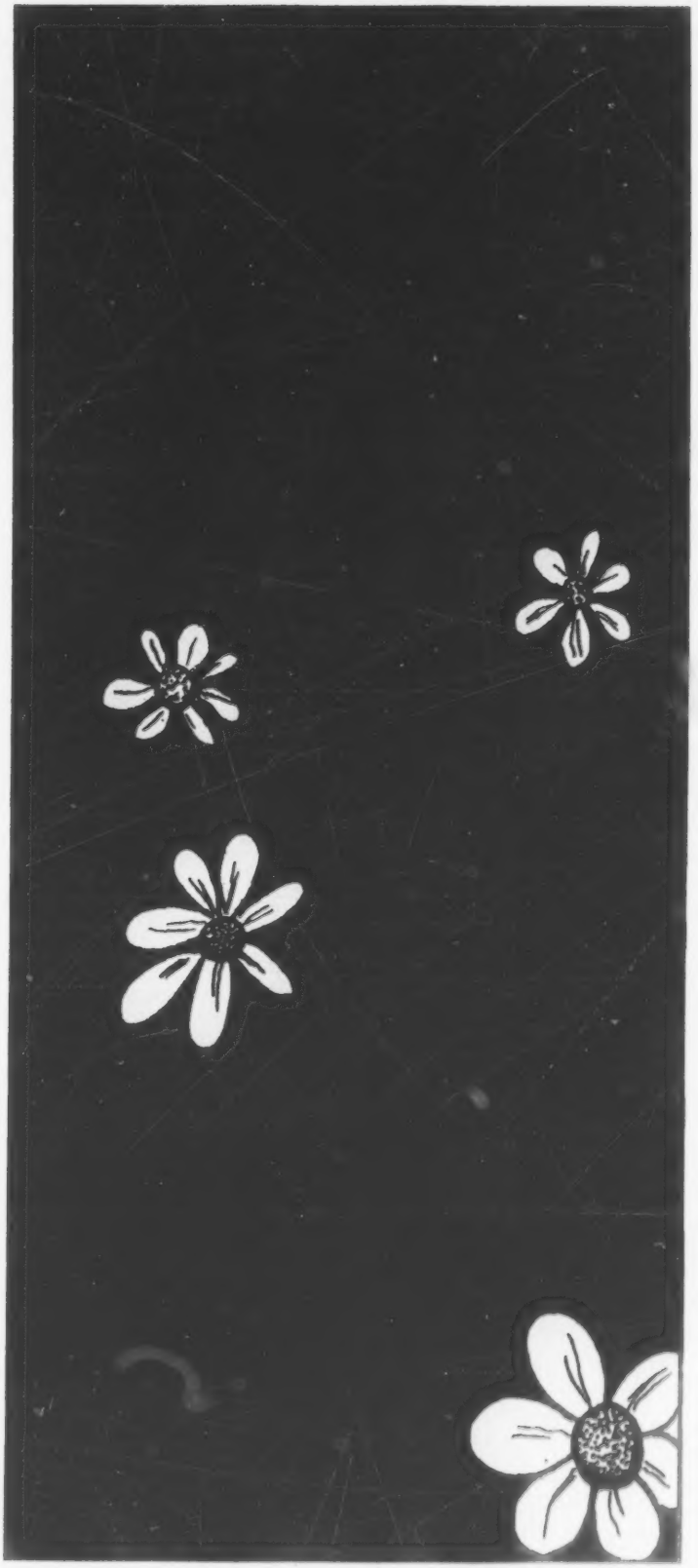

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Grandma Moses Meets ESL:
Art for Speaking and Writing Activities

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by Claudia J. Rucinski-Hatch

> Painters use their eyes
> To show us what they see
> But when that canvas dries
> We all see it differently.
> *Ain't No Song*
> D. Spinozza and J. Levine, 1974

Fine art has a power and richness that can deeply stimulate the imagination of ESL students. Because of that, it is well-suited to speaking and writing activities, both of which profit enormously from a strong wish to express an idea or reaction. The use of works of art also promotes an understanding of the target culture and its history. A third advantage is that it seems to enhance a "bridge function" between the pattern-recognizing right hemisphere of the brain and the more analytical, language-processing aspects of the left. After briefly discussing these three advantages, we will look at several examples of student writing in response to paintings by well known American artists.

Cultural Legacy

The legacy of a culture is contained in its artwork, which also provides students with exposure to a multitude of interesting points of incidental information. For example, with regard to U.S. culture, the paintings of Frederic Remington and Charles M. Russell portray the Old West while Grandma Moses' paintings show scenes of farm life. Students from hot climates may not be familiar with winter activities such as sledding, ice-skating, ice hockey, etc. as portrayed in Grandma Moses' paintings. American holiday celebrations are also depicted in Norman Rockwell's paintings such as *Thanksgiving* and *Union Station, Chicago at Christmas* as well as Grandma Moses' paintings *Halloween* and *July 4th*. American history can be seen in Norman Rockwell's *GI Homecoming* and *The Problem We All Live With*. Values of American society are evident in Norman Rockwell's *Freedom of Worship* and *Freedom of Speech*. These represent only a sampling of the possibilities for our ESL classroom.

Using Art to Bridge the Hemispheres

For most lay people (non-art historians), art is thought to be processed in the right hemisphere. When we go to an art museum and look at a painting, our first impulse is not to express our feelings about the painting in words. How do we behave? We step backward, we step forward, we look at the painting from top to bottom, bottom to top, left to right, right to left. We ask ourselves if we like it or not. How does the painting make us feel? We try to identify our feelings. Perhaps later we can verbalize our feelings. But when we do finally speak in words, it is only because our right hemipshere has helped us to approach the structured language abilities of the left hemisphere. It's as if the left and right hemispheres were connected by a bridge. We start contemplating art in the right hemisphere and then walk across the bridge to further process language in the left hemisphere. We may speak of left-brain and right-brain cultures. The Western industrialized societies represent a more left- brain orientation. We value technology, science, organization, efficiency, accuracy and proof; while right-brain cultures value art, music, spiritualism, mysticism and mystery. Left-brain cultures tend to value the work of the logical, rational mind; while right-brain cultures value the work of the hands, such as the ability to draw or create a beautiful embroidery.

Although American society is more left-brain oriented, many of our students originate from right-brain societies. Perhaps then it is correct to begin language learning activities in a right-brain orientation where these students feel more comfortable. They experience feelings in the right hemisphere and then are able to transfer these feelings to the left hemisphere where they are processed as spoken and/or written language.

What advantage does art bring for the development of language? Perhaps one answer is that the left hemisphere receives opportunities for vocabulary development and manipulation of target language structures. The right hemisphere receives opportunities for use of imagination and exploration and identification of feelings. Since many of our ESL students are refugees who have recently arrived from traumatic circumstances, the latter may be particularly helpful, according to what psychologists have told us about this population.

Edward Hopper's painting "Nighthawks" provides a stimulus for composition.

Incorporating Art and ESL

How are we to incorporate art and ESL? First, we begin by selecting paintings that lend themselves to this activity. Which paintings are appropriate depends on the level of the students and the focus of the lesson. This activity can be used at all levels of ESL and can be adapted to meet the particular needs of the students. For very beginning level students (those students who are beginning literacy), paintings should be chosen that show figures and depict activity and movement. This enables the students to discuss the *wh-* questions "Who are these people?" "What are they doing?" Students should work together in groups of at least two but not more than four. When the students are given their assigned painting, the title should be covered. They should be told to examine the painting, discuss it and write a story together about it. A handout prepared by the instructor should be distributed. This provides a guided compostion format for the students to work from. The instructor can spend some time with each group as they discuss the story of the painting and write their answers. They should be instructed to take only their answers from the handout and combine these answers to form a composition. Each group may then present their painting and composition to the rest of the class. The actual title of the painting can then be revealed and students can compare their title with that given by the artist. The teacher can give a short biography of the artist.

Following are sample questions for handout for lesson concentrating on *wh-* questions and vocabulary development:

1. Who are these people?
2. Where are they?
3. What are they doing?

This plan could be modified according to the needs of the group. For example, the instructor may wish to do this as a whole-class activity using a slide or poster rather than a print in an art book. The focus of the lesson might be simply on *wh-* questions or the present progressive. At the more advanced level, questions emphasizing the present perfect tense, past tense, "if" clauses, etc. might be included. For students at the very beginning level (non-literate), the teacher may want to do this as strictly an oral activity. The teacher has the freedom to structure this activity as she or he deems appropriate.

Apparent Chaos

After you have explained the procedure to the students and distributed the handout with the questions, let the fun begin! Your classroom may look like total chaos as students disagree with each other about who these people are and what they're doing, but in the process they're using a lot of English! This allows the classroom to be less teacher-directed and provides for cooperative learning as students have to discuss the painting and then work together to write a story. As they combine their answers to complete the composition, students need to consider transitions as well. Students can also help each

other edit their compositions. For example, Group 1 can help Group 2 as they are finalizing their composition. Are there spelling mistakes? How about irregular verb forms? It's true that we do all see that canvas differently. The following are samples of student writings about the Edward Hopper painting, *Nighthawks*:

Justice is Coming

In the picture we see an all-night diner in a big city with some customers. Some people have a job that begins or ends late at night; they don't have a sweet home and so go to an all-night diner to have some fast food. Sometimes their work isn't legal and is connected to the world of crime. People bring their far-from-nice feelings to the all-night diner and leave part of these feelings here. The man in the front of the picture is a typical representative of the current life around the all-night diner.

But this all-night diner remembers its visitors from the past. We see one of them at the counter. He was in jail for a long time because he had been involved in some illegal business. One of his partners stole all the money from the group and escaped. Now he wants to find this man. The ex-prisoner found their former boss' daughter and she suggested that he talk with the waiter of the all-night diner. The waiter has been working here for a long time. He knows many of the customers well and has heard a lot of stories from them. He might know something about this matter.

Another group wrote that the man with the woman was a drug dealer and the man sitting alone was the FBI agent who came to arrrest him. When I asked another group of beginning level students if they thought the people in the picture were happy, I got an enthusiastic "Oh, yes!" from a student. When I asked him why he thought they were happy, he replied, "Because they have money to go to a restaurant." This man was a recently-arrived refugee for whom a dinner in a restaurant would have been a complete luxury. Another student, a young woman recently-arrived from Bosnia, wrote a lengthy story about this painting and told me, "I love this painting so much. I don't know why but it gives me a good feeling. I love it." A group of recently-arrived Vietnamese students, having just survived thier first Midwestern winter, reviewed a Grandma Moses painting showing a winter scene full of outside activities, and called the painting, *Outside Snow—Wow!* Grandma Moses had entitled it *It Snows, Oh It Snows*.

Norman Rockwell's painting, *Freedom from Fear* was interpreted by two groups.

Family

They are a family: a father, a mother, a daughter and a son. The children were tired of playing with their toys so they went to sleep in their bedroom upstairs. The mother is taking care of her children, and the parents are talking about how sweet their children are. The parents seem to be happy to see their children sleeping in the early night. Before they came here, the father might have been reading the newspaper in the living room downstairs. After they finish with their children, they will go downstairs to the living room again and watch TV or talk about their children to each other. We think that the title of this picture is "Family" because this picture is a very ordinary expression for a family, but we could also feel the real love of the family in this picture.

We could see that this is a very peaceful family, so we would like to be there. When we first saw this picture it also reminded us of when we were young and we were children ourselves. If we could be here, we would like to take care of the children sleeping so peacefully and sweetly. We would like to kiss the children.

Below is the other interpretation of this painting:

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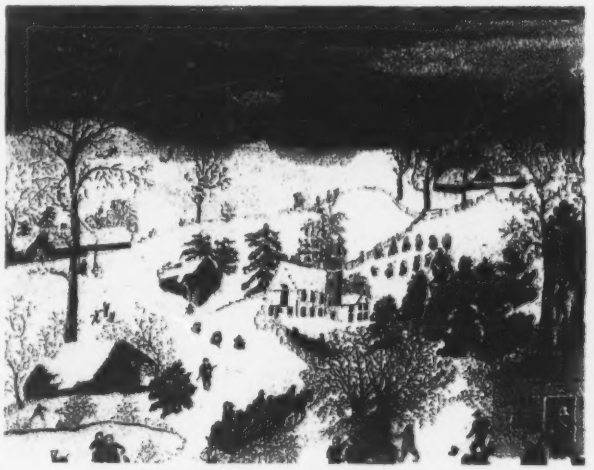
The House at Night

These people are at home and in the bedroom. They are husband, wife and children. They are here because this is their house. The parents are taking care of their children. The mother is singing a lullaby and the children are sleeping. The parents feel happy because they feel the children will have a good sleep. They came from the living room before and after they will go to their bedroom and they will sleep.

I think the title of this painting is "The House at Night" because I see the children sleeping and after that the parents will go to sleep too. I feel happy when I see this painting because everyone is quiet.

I would like to be here because I see they are a good family. It reminds me of when I lived in Vietnam. Every night my sister and I went to sleep and our parents always took care of us. I love my parents.

I would like to be here and go to sleep because the bedroom looks very nice and peaceful.



"It Snows, Oh It Snows" by Grandma Moses. Students re-entitled it "Outside Snow—Wow!"

This painting shows two children sleeping in their bed with the parents bending over them. The scene is indeed touching and students all seem to fondly recall their own childhoods. No one, however, has ever noticed that the father is holding a newspaper in his hands with the heading: "Bombing! Horror!" Norman Rockwell painted *Freedom From Fear* in 1943.

Additional Activities

There are many additional activities involving the use of art in the ESL class. For example, students could write individual (not group) compositions and then do some drawing or painting of their own. For example, using Grandma Moses' *My Homeland*, show the painting and read what Grandma Moses wrote about where she lived. Have the students write a story about their homeland and make a drawing or painting if they choose! If space permits, decorate the classroom with their drawings, posters or prints with copies of the compositions next to them. This is a great self-esteem booster! Give a biography of the artist and, if possible, show a video about her/him. Watching Norman Rockwell use his neighbors as models for his work makes the painting become very real. A field trip to the local art museum is also a very worthwhile activity. I profoundly remember a trip to the Milwaukee Art Museum with my group of recently-arrived Southeast Asian refugee students. One Hmong woman, who could barely say her address and telephone number in English, came around the corner of the gallery and suddenly saw the Georgia O'Keefe painting, *Poppies*. The student ran to the painting and said, "My farm, my farm". She had been a poppy farmer in Laos.

Paintings can evoke powerful feelings that can later be expressed in language! Our students may come to us empty of English but certainly not empty of wisdom, intelligence and life. This contemplation of great paintings can provide them with an outlet to express all that they have to say.

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On Creating Theatrical Collages with ESL Students

Rhonda Naidich teaches ESL at LaGuardia and Bronx Community Colleges (City University of New York) and professional development courses in The English Language Teaching Program at The New School for Social Research in New York. She has presented numerous teacher-training workshops on the use of theater techniques in the language classroom.

by Rhonda Naidich

Theater arts in the context of language learning is often boxed into the category of studying and performing published plays. Certainly there is validity in the study of the texts of great playwrights in terms of enhancing reading, vocabulary, and pronunciation skills. There is, however, a whole other realm to the application of theater arts in the language classroom that needs to be explored and experimented with: original play development. In my case, what has evolved from working with ESL students is a dramatic art form that I have dubbed "theatrical collage."

I was first introduced to play development techniques as a student of Shirley Kaplan's acting/writing/directing workshop at the Ensemble Studio Theater in New York City. Kaplan, a founding member of the Paper Bag Players (a New York based children's theater company) and currently head of the theater department at Sarah Lawrence College, suggested that original material produced by and for a multicultural group of foreign students could be quite invigorating. My participation in Kaplan's workshop and her influence on my theatrical work with ESL students couldn't have been more timely. After my fourth rendition of Jean-Claude van Itallie's *Interview*, I was ready to change. I was ready to allow students to explore their imaginations by spontaneously creating scenes through constant improvisational work that tapped into their unique forms of movement and drama. I no longer needed "the Script."

Free of the burden of finding suitable one-act plays, I could spend more time researching exercises that would enable students to create their own plays and journey into the unknown. I will attempt to put into words a process that I have developed over the past six years teaching a ten-week acting workshop elective (four hours weekly) to intermediate ESL students enrolled in an intensive language program at LaGuardia Community College's English Language Center.

Exploration, Discovery and Trust

Approximately 15 students of multicultural backgrounds enter the classroom every semester because of their underlying desire to perform. Each student has his/her particular inhibitions and preconceived notions of what theater and acting are all about. More importantly, all of the students have hidden performance skills that are incorporated into the body language from an early age because of exposure to the distinct cultural art forms of dance, mime, opera, martial arts, and music. During the initial weeks, I create an environment of exploration, discovery, and trust. Who are we as a group? What talents can be tapped into? If Miyako is a jazz dancer, and Edgar, a classical guitarist, why not incorporate those talents into the show?

At the beginning stages, I emphasize group physical improvisations which quickly help to set up dynamic group relationships. Language is utilized in the conceptualization and the decision-making processes rather than in the enactment of the scene. Viola Spolin addresses the importance of group playing in *Improvisation for the Theater*: "Improvisational theater requires very close group relationships because it is from group agreement and group playing that material evolves for scenes and plays" (p. 9).

In *Impro* under the heading "Getting the Right Relationship," Keith Johnstone talks about teacher responsibility to the group: "There seems no doubt that a group can make or break its members, and that it's more powerful than the individuals in it. A great group can propel its members forward so that they do amazing things. Many teachers don't seem to think that manipulating a group is their responsibility at all. If they're working with a destructive bored group, they just blame the students for being dull or uninterested. It's essential for the teacher to blame himself if the group aren't in a good state" (p. 29).

Beginning each class session with a group physical warm-up encourages students to let go of their

inhibitions and creates an environment where risk-taking is the norm. Students stand in a circle. One student initiates a rhythmic sound and movement which is mirrored by the rest. Then, the next student transforms the sound and movement into a new combination, again mirrored by the whole group. Every student gets a turn. This particular exercise actually led to a scene in an original play I developed with ESL students entitled, *Pepe's American Dream*. Pepe, an undocumented Mexican immigrant, dreams he is captured by a religious cult leader while visiting the Statue of Liberty. Pepe partakes in the group's ritualistic circle in which each member acts out a past life (sound and movement of a grotesque animal) and a future life (sound and movement abstraction of the American dream character—a rich golfer, for example).

Collaborative sensory exercises are invaluable in training students to use their imaginations. (Spolin is the best resource on these). Silently, students act together in small groups looking for a lost object, watching a sport, moving something, feeling something move them, getting out of a trap, listening to live concert. With one of my acting groups, getting out of a trap evolved into the opening of a science-fiction scene in which student/actors portrayed aliens from another planet struggling to get out of a spaceship that had crashed in the middle of Times Square.

Feelings of vitality and heightened interest characterize Ms. Naidich's technique.

Collaborative Conceptualization

Once students are warmed up and there is a feeling of vitality in the room, I move on to exercises that add elements of storytelling. The "silent movie sequence" is a good starter. Students pair up. One student acts, the other directs. Together they conceptualize a one-minute silent scene to be performed by the actor with a clear beginning, middle, and surprise ending. This exercise has produced a wide range of material: from the absurd, such as a male student-actor portraying a pregnant woman about to give birth on a crowded subway train, to the serious drama of a drug addict searching for a needle and finally shooting up. Although the product is silent, language is used in the communication between director and actor in conceptualizing and deciding the details of a sequence of actions.

Sound stories are another example of collaborative storytelling in which language is shared in development rather than in the enactment. As a warm-up, students stand in a circle and produce layered rhythmic sounds, followed by sustained, and finally lyrical sounds. Students divide into small groups and create a story with a surprise ending by huddling together and producing a "sound collage." Lights off add to the drama. This exercise is useful in play development since sound can by used as either a backdrop to scenes or as a transition from one scene to another. In a production with ESL students entitled, *A Nightmare in a New York Hotel*, student-actors vocalized sounds of New York City tough streets (police sirens, ambulance, a homeless person begging, fighting) to signal to the audience a transition from an upbeat opening scene of arriving in New York City to an imminently dangerous scene about to be played out.

Free-Speak

When the group members begin to trust each other, I introduce students to a classic Chicago City Limits-style improvisational exercise: "freeze tag improvs." About six students line up at the back of the playing area. Two students come forward and begin a scene. Whoever begins the dialogue establishes the relationship between the pair, and the second actor must accept his role. Actor 1: "You didn't call me last night. I know you are seeing someone else." Actor 2 must accept that he is actor 1's boyfriend and is being accused of infidelity. The actor must also say "yes" to enable the scene to develop. Saying "no" deadens the scene, while saying "yes" allows for anything to happen. A scene emerges. Any actor from the back calls out, "freeze," and the players physically freeze in mid-action. The third actor taps one of the actors on the shoulders, takes on her posture and initiates a new scene

by creating a different character and relationship, suggested by the physicalization. Actor 3: "I need to operate on your hand." Actor 1 or 2 accepts that he is a patient and is in the hospital with a doctor (actor 3). The scene plays out, and the other students join in the exercise. If they get stuck on language, I coach them to repeat words until a new word pops out (a Sanford Meisneer technique which works well with language learners). Physical actions also add to the liveliness of these quick sketches:

The "theatrical collage" enables students to string together various activities.

Actor 1: "Operate, operate on my hand?"

Actor 3: "Yes, now, operate, operate on your hand!"

Actor 1: "Now operate?...I think tomorrow better to operate."

Actor 3: "Lie down!" (forces actor 1 down)

I find this exercise analogous to free-writing in that students have the chance to speak spontaneously, not worry about errors, and allow their subconscious minds to create language. It also provides a wealth of material for character and scene development. Students have told me that this particular acting exercise has enhanced their fluency more than any other.

Developing Scenes

By the third or fourth week of class, students are ready to journey into creating longer scenes involving more dialogue and character development. At this stage, I have a tape recorder on at all times documenting improvisational material. A collection of index cards: WHO (relationship), WHAT (conflict/situation), and WHERE (place) are useful in providing skeleton outlines of scenes to be improvised. Students can also come up with their own outlines. In improvisational work, it is important to avoid planning the dialogue or outcome of a scene; otherwise, spontaneity and originality are lost. If the scenes seem stilted, I may ask students to stand in the back of the playing area and add sound effects every now and then during an improvisation to shake up the performers. I sometimes ask students to switch to their first language or speak in gibberish as a way of breaking down barriers to original thoughts. Often, groups choose to develop scenes for production that incorporate languages other than English. By using the audience's languages, the players are letting audience members in on secret information; thereby, intensifying their interest in the work itself.

As the training progresses, the group focuses on ideas for a production, "a theatrical collage." The concept of collage was introduced to me by Shirley Kaplan, who not surprisingly started out in the arts as a painter. The collage enables the group to string together monologues, scenes, scripted work, unscripted work, dance, or mime pieces into one production. It builds on the strengths of the group as a whole as well as its individual members. It also allows students to participate in as little or as much as they want to in the final performance.

Brainstorming

The group brainstorms ideas on themes, genres, characters, stories, messages—anything goes. We also take note of what scenes produced through improvisations were evocative and worthy of further exploration. In developing *A Nightmare in a New York Hotel*, students settled on the ideas: the breakdown of the family, the destruction of the environment, and a hotel in New York. We then began to improvise scenes around those three ideas until we came up with material we liked. The hotel became a framing device for two-character scenes portraying family tensions. At one point in the production, all the characters in the hotel gather in one room, look out an imaginary window, and see trees being cut down in Central Park to make room for prisons. The transition is to an abstract environmental scene in which actors portray abused trees, choppers who are following orders, the last picnicking happy family, and an opportunistic reporter. In *Pepe's American Dream*, students agreed on the continuity of one character (the undocumented immigrant) in a collage of surrealistic nightmarish experiences. Imagina-

tions flew in brainstorming sessions: a "coyote"-led escape from Mexico, a trip on a hijacked airplane, a crash into the Statue of Liberty, a flight to a secret religious cult gathering, a drug deal in a Karaoke bar, a chance meeting with an ex-girlfriend in the "Lemonlight Club." This particular group was interested in a physically-charged performance incorporating dance and mime. Therefore, brainstorming sessions generated ideas for scenes calling for a lot of movement.

Students transform quickly into multiple characters.

The Emerging Script

As a language/drama teacher, I have replaced the notion of "the script" with that of an "emerging script." Once the ideas are agreed upon, a script is a necessary tangible product of weeks of improvisational work leading to material for a final production. The last stages of the play development process involve transcribing dialogue from taped improvisations and shaping the material into a dramatic form. My role becomes that of a dramaturge (in a longer semester students can take on more of that function). In the abstract scenes, I may write down just a list of actions that were improvised. Orchestrating student writings is a technique that creates dramatic beginnings and endings to theatrical collages. In the original play, *Fragments of Immigrant Life*, I asked students to write letters to themselves in the voice of a relative, friend, or lover. Then we chose the most powerful lines from each letter and juxtaposed them to come up with an opening piece entitled, "Letters from Home." Here's an excerpt:

Actor 1: Dear Kazumi...It's warm in Japan...looks like Spring.

Actor 2: My dear son...I hope everything is okay with you...As you know after you went to New York, the war began.

Actor 3: Ikoo, what are you doing now? I always think about marrying you.

Actor 4: Rocio, do you remember I told you my father wants to get a divorce?

Actor 5: Yesterday I bought a Nikon F3 because Nikon is my favorite camera.

Actor 2: We are going crazy from the sounds of aircraft every day at midnight.

To create mood, live music can be added—a harmonica, or a percussion instrument, depending on the group's talents.

With script in hand and access to a real theater space, students take the idea of a performance more seriously, and are able to visualize a production in the making. Script memorization is achievable in a short period of time (unlike the experience of working with published plays) because the words are the students own words, words that have meaning to them. As dramaturge, I may delete redundant dialogue or move some dialogue around, but essentially the voices are their own.

Technical Aspects

Technical aspects of production such as choreography, music/sound design, props, flyers, and costumes can be assigned according to individual interests. With limited time, a bare stage can be transformed by unusual prop pieces, simple movement of boxes and folding chairs, and basic lighting. *For A Nightmare in a New York Hotel*, two students made huge cartoon-like hotel keys out of cardboard which doubled as saws in the tree-chopping scene, giving the play a visual style. A Japanese student who had worked as a professional dancer, choreographed a dance piece symbolizing a Utopian world and serving as an abstract collage-finale. Clothing accessories can be added to a basic black costume to help student/actors transform quickly into multiple characters.

The Payoff

Creating and performing original theatrical collages with ESL students for a multi-cultural audience on stage with lights, music, and sound is the ultimate end product of a total language learning ex-

perience. By focusing on performance and project-development skills, real language and meaningful communication are the natural by-products. Tears, laughter, applause are the concrete rewards of a genuine exchange of communication in all of its forms between performers and audience. Language departments in schools and colleges need to look closely at how their auditorium/theater spaces are currently being used. Implementing original theatrical projects produced by and for language learners would have an everlasting impact on those who partake in the journey.

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The Creative Connection in Movies and TV: What Degrassi High Teaches Teachers

by Jim Ward and Suzanne Lepeintre

Jim Ward has degrees in drama and ESL from the University of Hawaii and has studied film in Tokyo. He presently teaches in the Intensive and Academic Programs at the University of Washington, where he writes text materials which incorporate film in the ESL classroom. He has presented at numerous conferences.

Suzanne Lepeintre is an instructor in the Intensive English and the Academic English Programs at the University of Washington where she is currently working on integrating the Internet into ESL curriculum. She is also studying for a Ph.D. in English focused on computers and literacy.

Video drama made for the ESL classroom is boring. While there is an abundance of it available for use in today's speaking and listening classes, few of these videos deal with contemporary, relevant issues. The situations presented lack meaningful context and fail to relate to the lives of students. Because they are made with the intention of teaching a lesson rather than telling a story, ESL video dramas lack the reality and originality that spur creative discussion and inspire the imagination. In response to the failure of "made-for-ESL" video, we have developed a set of criteria to enable teachers to choose video "outside of ESL"—real film, the stuff of TV and movies, film which sparks classroom creativity and inspires students' imagination.

Risque but Successful

For years, intermediate listening classes at the University of Washington Intensive English Program endured the tedium of well-known ESL video dramas and workbooks. Out of frustration, teachers started turning to television and movies. In many ways, TV was an instant success. Episodes were often more risque but also more relevant. The realism of TV shows became a catalyst for the students' imaginations, pushing them to explore how they knew the world around them. They loved it!

A Need for Teaching Materials

There was a problem, however: with TV and movies, there were no materials. And here we discovered our task: find something good, something enduring, and create materials for it. And yet, not just any TV show would do. Buying a film or TV series and developing classroom materials would require time and money. That tempers enthusiasm for picking just any run-of-the-mill show. Choosing a film in which to invest so much effort is not easy. It has to be topical, timely, episodic and exciting. We wanted a show that realistically portrayed American culture, yet not something so culture-bound it could not be understood. There were so many things to consider, we hardly knew where to start.

Although programs like *Roseanne* and *The Cosby Show* made our classes entertaining, the culturally specific humor failed to spark meaningful discussion and the clever one-liners didn't provide students with the nuts and bolts language they needed. We continued to search for an appropriate series through a haphazard method of trial and error. It was in this state of excitement and mild confusion that we happened one Sunday afternoon upon *Degrassi High*. Made in Canada, this PBS (Public Broadcasting System) series had won awards for its portrayal of the life and times of a diverse group of students. We liked what we saw.

Gripping the Imagination

Uncompromising and powerful, it gripped the minds and imaginations of students and teachers alike. Here was a drama series, we felt, that cried out for classroom use. PBS put us in touch with the distributor. We purchased 12 episodes and began to write our own materials. That was two years ago. Today, 30 teachers and a thousand students later, *Degrassi High* remains a powerful classroom tool. Why? Because it is a film with a story that wants to be told rather than a lesson that needs to be taught.

Suggested Standards

Because of this positive response, we feel *Degrassi High* could help set a standard for teachers to use in selecting video drama for their own ESL classrooms. We would like, therefore, to share what

we feel is good about the series to help other teachers avoid a time-eating, hunt and peck, trial and error method of searching for an appropriate TV show or film. If our goal with film fiction in the ESL classroom is to inspire imagination and spur creative discussion, we must begin to look at films and judge them on the basis of authenticity, both in the content and the production.

Content

First, before committing to a video drama, teachers need to ask important questions about the content. A film for the classroom should be well written, socially relevant, and complex.

Is the story well written? A good film script is not merely plausible, it compels us to continue reading or watching. Realistic dialogue and situation, along with three-dimensional characters with whom students can feel a strong identification combine to create an accurate portrayal of the target culture. Such a picture of character, family and culture should naturally touch on universal themes which allow students to relate to the story on a variety of levels.

Jim Ward (center) and students quickly became engrossed in TV series entitled Degrassi High.

Is the film socially relevant? Good content requires a straightforward presentation of topics and concerns to which students can relate. *Degrassi High* covers such heavies as AIDS and safe sex, drugs, teen pregnancy, sexual abuse, sexism, and divorce. Students of Degrassi High also deal with the more personal issues of dating, first love, trust, breaking up, living away from home, study habits, friendship, peer-pressure and self-esteem. Stories and characters which evolve around these subjects provide a framework for discussion and exploration that can benefit both teachers and students. When students can connect issues to their own lives, they are given the impetus to express their feelings and share their ideas. Such films encourage students to examine their own values—they nudge them forward and invite them to speak up for what they believe.

If it is socially relevant, is it also adequately complex? A complex presentation attempts to treat all human beings with equal respect, regardless of ethnic and cultural differences. It includes positive stories and images of women and minority groups. In *Degrassi High*, we see interracial couples, people with AIDS, teenage mothers, single parents, and the homeless. Complexity, as it is stated here, is important because it allows students and teachers the opportunity to step into the shoes of people who are different. It asks for authenticity in the presentation of a world that is gray and not black and white. It rattles our brains and emotions a bit by not giving us easy answers. It forces us to view characters and issues from a variety of perspectives, and allows and encourages us to discuss and explore. A good film is provocative in that it leaves the viewers with unanswered questions. It sparks their imagination by turning them inside-out and letting them see the world with new eyes.

Production

Equally as important as the script or content of a film is the production. A story is only as good as the teller. Make sure that the film is well acted, has dramatic tension, is episodic and has redundancy of meaning. Here again, teachers will want to ask important questions before they make a video selection.

Is the film well acted? Good acting makes us believe in the character. Each of the actor's movements and gestures, the tone of his voice, the speed with which he speaks, the pauses he makes and the accents and dialects he uses—all ring true. Bad acting makes us feel uncomfortable and embarrassed because we don't, we can't, believe in the character. When Joey and Dwayne fight in the Degrassi High boys' restroom, far from embarrassing us, they have us on the edge of our seats. Good acting makes us forget everything except our concern for the characters and what will happen to them.

Does the film have dramatic tension? Dramatic tension is conflict that exists between characters, within characters, and between ideas and emotions. Like good acting, it makes us forget everything but the moment. In classroom techniques like video-drama, whose over-riding purpose should be to provide communicative urgency, making students forget about the language and listen to meaning is crucial. Powerful drama achieves this aim.

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Is the film episodic? Episodes are small scenes, sketches, climaxes, and dramas within the larger story. Within each 30 minute episode of *Degrassi High*, multiple story lines interweave to create many short, two to four-minute sketches. Each sketch is a chapter with a beginning, middle and almost an end—parts of a puzzle which add to a sense of excitement, that tantalize students and make them want to know what happens next. Episodes are incremental. As story and characters grow and continue,

Suzanne Lepeintre shares excitement with her colleague and her students.

students build schema from ever-expanding context, the i + 1 that allows them to acquire form by understanding content. Episodes, by their very nature, create natural breaks, places to pause, reflect, discuss and internalize.

Is there redundancy of meaning? Well directed films provide numerous avenues through which we, the audience, can understand a story. Location and scenery, sets and costumes, movement and gesture are some of the many variables that retell the tale and help us to fill in the gaps when our ability to exploit verbal language has been exhausted. If we don't understand it one way, then we can get it another.

Good video is everywhere but little of it has been made accessible to ESL students. This article is an informal argument in favor of creating textbooks for films, rather than films for textbooks. With the criteria presented here, we hope that teachers will be able to go out and mine the richness of films that already exist. Only then will students get excited about learning language. A teacher's purpose may be to teach language, but the purpose of film in the language classroom should be to tell a story. Learning how to select a good story--so that students can begin to use and explore language in a meaningful way—is the first step.

Appendix

The "Degrassi High Text" is a result of many hours of collaboration between Jim Ward, Bill Preston and numerous instructors at the University of Washington. It is written for intermediate and advanced ESL/EFL students. Twelve units correspond to the twelve episodes of the video. The "Degrassi High Text" is still unpublished, but the following rough outline and brief description of a typical unit (Episode 2) might provide instructors with some ideas of how they might organize their own texts for an appropriate video.

Episode 2: BAD BLOOD, Part 2

Activities

Part One: *Before You Watch*

1. Setting the Context
2. Sharing Your Knowledge
3. Guessing Meaning from Context
4. Preview Questions
5. Building Vocabulary
6. Listening for New Words and Expressions
7. Making Predictions

This first section sets the context for the major social issue or topic in the episode and allows students to activate their background knowledge on the issue, set some basic learning goals, preview some important words or expressions, think about some key questions relating to the episode, and make predictions about what they will see and hear.

Part Two: ***After You Watch***

1. Understanding Details
   - Exercise 1: Putting Names to Faces
   - Exercise 2: When Did it Happen?
   - Exercise 3: Who Is It?
   - Exercise 4: Who Said It?
   - Exercise 5: True or False?
2. Understanding New Words and Expressions
3. Discussing Characters and Stories
4. Writing About the Episode
5. Listening for Ideas
   - Exercise 1: AIDS Workshop
   - Exercise 2: Condom Machines: Pro and Con
6. Using Language
   - Challenging statements with So?
   - Introducing excuses, explanations, or refusing invitations with structures like "It's just (that)..."

This section contains language skills exercises designed to check students' comprehension of specific details in the episode, such as identifying important characters, events, and conversations, including work on understanding new vocabulary and expressions. These more discrete, focused skills exercises lead into broader group activities dealing with more complex issues, like describing and summarizing main storylines and subplots, and looking at some functional aspects of language from the episode.

Videos can grasp the mind of students and teachers alike.

Part Three: ***Going Beyond the Video***

1. Focusing on Culture
   - Activity 1: Expressing Anger
   - Activity 2: Michelle and BLT
   - Activity 3: Calling People Names
2. Focusing on Values
   - Activity 1: Telling Lies
   - Activity 2: Blackmailing Someone
3. Discussing Issues
4. Connecting to Community
5. Journal Writing

Activities in this section are aimed at extending and expanding students' understanding and experience of the specific episode, requiring them to reflect on the issues raised and relate them to their own experience, values, and culture. There are also suggestions for follow-up activities that can be explored within the students' own community.

References

The Cosby Show. National Broadcasting Company. New York.

Degrassi High. Public Broadcasting Service. WGBH, Boston. *Degrassi High* is owned and distributed by Direct Cinema Limited of Los Angeles.

Roseanne. Columbia Broadcasting System. New York.

NOTE: The following sources offer additional information useful to teachers wishing to develop the use of video in the ESL classroom.

Stempleski, Susan. (1987). "Short Takes: Using Authentic Video in the English Class." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (21st, Westende, Belgium, April 12-14,1987).

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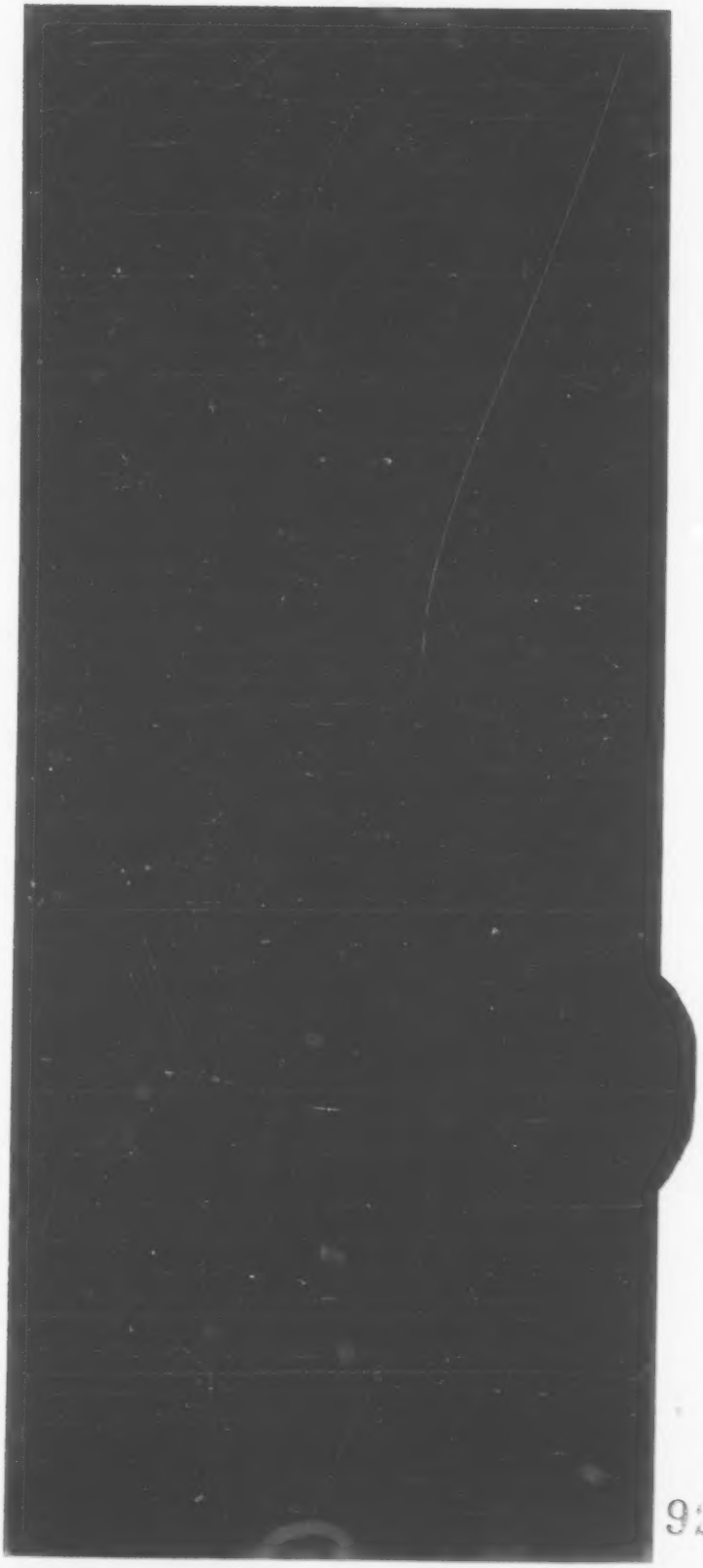

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Cultural Artifacts

Joshua Dale is a Foreign Lecturer in the English Department of Tokyo Liberal Arts University, teaching American and British Culture.

by Joshua Dale

In "Authentic Listening," Porter and Roberts (1987) present a convincing argument for the use of authentic materials—those intended for native speakers rather than non-native learners—in the second language classroom. Their detailed listing of the advantages of these materials may be summarized in one word: context. Unlike English Language Training (ELT) materials, which are designed to focus on a limited number of language functions, authentic materials are packed with meaning and associations connected to their culture of origin. But how is this over-abundance typically deployed in the classroom? According to Porter and Roberts, "Authentic texts...commit us to trying to replicate in class the roles the native speaker plays in the authentic situation" (p.182). For example, consider the difference between a textbook page which offers a reproduction of a restaurant menu and a real menu in glossy full-color offered to each student. The former offers information only: the context of dining in a restaurant has been removed. Distributing actual menus restores some of this context—a much larger number of item choices, information about payment, tax, etc.—but does this place the learner in the role played by a native speaker at a restaurant?

Not exactly. But one might come much closer to realizing Porter and Roberts' definition by using, for instance, a situational role play following the Natural Method: small groups of students at separate tables, the aforementioned menus, student waiters with real order pads serving up plastic food, Muzak for authentic background noise, napkins, place settings, "surly waiter" and "fly-in-the-soup" role cards. Obviously, there are no limits with this approach towards authentic materials: it is a continuum, a sliding scale with the textbook page at one end and, presumably, a field trip to a real restaurant at the other.

The Lived Reality of Another Culture

If the goal of placing students in the exact position as native speakers is an impossible one, then why use authentic materials? I believe the advantages lie in the students' awareness of these materials as authentic; i.e., as part of the lived reality of another culture. Authentic materials thus have a tremendous potential for stimulating the imagination of students in a way impossible to realize with standard ELT materials. The meaning contained in authentic materials is over-determined; by this I mean that they typically contain more—at times much more—information than is necessary for completing a particular classroom task. The faculty of the imagination comes into play when students are required to scan large amounts of material and construct patterns of relation between items they identify as significant.

There is another way in which the meaning of authentic materials is over-determined: they have a special aura generated by their direct association with the daily lives of people from another culture. This is the point at which the connection between authentic materials and the imagination is fully realized: for through this fetishistic contact with an item whose meaning lies beyond its physical existence, the imagination may forge a link through which to apprehend an existence manifestly different from its own. Authentic materials, in other words, offer the student access to a spark of "reality" which may propel him or her to greater insight and knowledge of people from other cultures.

The series of activities I will describe all use brochures describing various tourist attractions across the United States. There are several reasons for choosing this particular type of authentic material. Brochures cost nothing: even multiple copies are available for free if you're willing to empty the racks. They are also light, portable and easy to obtain from convention centers, major hotels, the American Automobile Association, etc. It is even possible to acquire them without visiting the United States, by writing to the Chambers of Commerce of various states (sorry about the American bias here;

needless to say, brochures from countries other than the US would be just as effective). The most important reason for choosing brochures, however, is that they are interesting: highly visual, attention-grabbing, packed with both advertising rhetoric and practical information. In addition, we shouldn't lose sight of the fact that much money and creativity went into the design of these slips of paper, aspects which we language teachers are quite free to use to our advantage—after all, we're not reproducing them, in whole or in part.

Mr. Dale's students used tourist brochures to prepare for an imaginary trip.

Brochure Questionnaire

This activity involves one-page brochures: stiff rectangular cards, typically with picture and captions on the front, information on the back. Students are paired for the first half of the activity with each pair receiving one brochure. After reading the brochure together with their partner, each student receives a questionnaire. Each brochure has buried somewhere within it the answer to one of the questions; for instance, "Where can you have a champagne brunch?" would be answered by the pair with the brochure from "'Climb on a Rainbow' Balloon Flights." The students first work with their own brochure to answer one question, then circulate and talk to other pairs to find the rest of the answers. The brochures serve as role cards to the extent that the students act as if they will be taking the trip described by their brochure, thus encouraging the use of communicative English: "Where are you going?" or "What are you going to do?" instead of "What answer do you know?"

Once everyone has completed the questionnaire, each pair of students alternates asking and answering all the questions to check their answers. I end this activity by asking the students a deceptively simple question: Would you want to visit this place? This is a preview for later activities which concentrate on the wider cultural issues around brochures. The real question I'm asking is: Is the brochure successful in its purpose of generating a desire on the part of the reader to visit the destination it describes?

Travel Agencies

The second set of activities uses regular-sized trifold brochures, which have more information and graphics than the one-page cards. I divide the class into thirds: two thirds are tourists and receive short one or two-sentence role cards describing their interests or characters. The cards may specify a character with a certain hobby, a large family, someone who has been working to the point of exhaustion, etc. Once they receive their role cards, the students decide what kind of vacation they will try to find. Meanwhile, the remaining third of the class splits further into three groups, each of which is a travel agency. The new multiple page brochures are split evenly among the three companies (include the one page brochures if sheer numbers are needed; the ratio of brochures to tourists should be around 2:1) and the travel agents spend a few minutes studying them. The goal of the vacationing students is to find the perfect destination, while the travel agents compete to sell as many trips as possible.

Here the comments of the students as they work through the activity begin to reflect the effect of the brochures on the imagination. Those in the tourist role, when in the process of locating their perfect location, often ask the travel agents to explain or justify those brochures describing what strikes them as strange or unusual. This activity provides a good example of how imagination may supersede hard fact to apprehend a different cultural reality. For instance, "Bedrock City" is the name of a theme park based on *The Flintstones*, a television show made in the USA. The brochure for "Bedrock City" mentions nowhere that the Flintstones' characters originated on an American children's television program, yet students were able to ascertain from the images and information the brochure did provide that there was some outer cultural context for the images of Fred Flintstone and the gang.

Many of the multiple-page brochures also include maps to the destination they describe: these lend themselves well to an activity involving route-following and directions. The worksheet I use contains a line drawing of the United States; students test their knowledge of American geography by tracing

their route from an arbitrary starting point to the destination on their brochure: the Grand Canyon, Disneyland, Niagara Falls, etc. They attempt to label as many states and cities as they can along the way.

After their attempt to label the route from memory, the students receive photocopies of road maps which they use to more accurately chart the path to their destination (some pre-teaching of the US highway system of state and interstate freeways, toll roads, etc. is needed here). When the students are finished, they are paired with members of other groups whom they verbally guide to their destination. I also give the students a "driving distances and times" chart so they can discover how long it would take to drive to their destination. Here the reaction of students centered around what for many was the first true apprehension of the radically different scale extent in the United States as compared to Japan, where this unit was taught. At first the students knew only the distance to their destination as measured by eye on the map and in miles by adding up the map's mile indicators. Distance, however, is a relatively abstract means of coming to terms with scale; which was obvious in the struggle of the student's to relate their map journey to their previous travel experiences. This contrasted greatly to their reaction once time, represented by the "driving distances and times" chart, entered the picture. Time is a concrete indicator in this case, representing as it does the hours or days spent behind the wheel of a car. Every student could relate this measurement of scale to his or her prior experience, and the gasps heard round the classroom were ample testimony to the imagination's leap into a new reality represented by the immense scale of vacation travel in the United States.

The teacher sits back as excited students discuss cultural topics raised by the use of realia.

Extent of Comprehension

According to Phillips and Shettlesworth, "It must be accepted that total comprehension has often to be abandoned as a lesson aim" when using authentic materials (107). However, if there is time to delve more deeply into the brochures, if the students work in groups and at home to understand them, then complete comprehension is possible. Once this is attained, the teacher may move the activities to a higher level and begin teaching the cultural content of the brochures. Small-group discussions, writing assignments, speeches, etc. are all methods which lend themselves to the pursuit of this goal.

Several content areas were investigated in my class. First, the images presented by the brochures: the selection and presentation of these are as important to the purpose of the brochures as are the words they contain. Students discussed how the choice and composition of the images on the brochure contributed to its goal of attracting visitors. What emotional content were the pictures meant to convey? Obviously answering this question required exercising the imagination, but more was involved than merely staring at a picture. In order to interpret the images, students were required to place themselves in the scene, imagining themselves at the site of the photograph. They were aided in this when they examined the language—adjectives, descriptive phrases, etc.—that the brochures employed to further their purpose.

In the "Bedrock City" and highway map examples cited previously, the authentic nature of the brochures provided the necessary spark to kindle the students' imaginary efforts to begin exploration of the culture which produced these materials. From this point, they were able to make generalizations about the aspects or qualities of leisure activities which are most valued in the United States, and proceeded even further to comment upon hitherto unknown aspects of the American character.

References

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Graphics from the Front: Artistry in Language Teaching

Susan Gill has taught ESL in California, Colorado, Alabama, Massachusetts, and New York. She works at the American Language Program at the University of Georgia in Athens. Ms. Gill designed the pictorial cards and wrote the chapter on vocabulary games for a collaboratively written textbook tentatively entitled A Novel Approach: English for Bookworms and Movie Buffs *to be published by the University of Michigan Press. In the following article, the author/illustrator discusses her students' graphic designs.*

by Susan Gill

A colleague of mine at the University of Georgia took a bag of Hershey's Kisses into one of her ESL classes and gave each student a piece of the silver foil-wrapped candy. She told her students that there were many different ways of looking at objects. For example, she said, we can describe them, analyze them or associate them with other things. She asked her class to spend a few minutes thinking about their candy and then to write about it. Kwang-Sun Chung, a 25-year old Korean man affectionately known as "Sunny," was a student in my colleague's writing class and my listening/speaking class. He was a gentle person who sang in the University choir and attended church. This is what he wrote (unedited):

THE CHOCOLATE

You shoud not tug violently at her
one-piece dress which is brilliant
and beautiful. Take her hand on which
is written "Kisses" and pull it gently.
You can see a delicious-looking flesh.
Quietly and slowly, peel her dress from
top to bottom. Wait! Don't make her naked,
she'll be shy. Put it in your mouth. she
will convince you.

Teachers search for ways to communicate that do not leave students feeling vulnerable and exposed, yet inspire them to reveal their ideas. Requiring international students to express themselves in English, is, in a sense, taking something away from them, divesting them of a cover which usually protects them, namely their mother tongue. While some students obviously enjoy using their non-native language skills in front of a group, others seem to feel stripped and apprehensive, especially at the beginning of a course.

Unfolding Personality

In certain cultures, an urgent tempo—a colorful insistence upon touch, speech and interaction—prevails. In others, the personality unfolds slowly like a paper fan. When we demand "active participation" in English class, we may be overriding cultural precepts about modesty and reserve. How, then, do we structure a variety of activities so that classroom interplay is inclusive?

Years ago, as a novice teacher in Los Angeles, I felt exasperated one day when my attempts to involve a group of Japanese students in conversation failed. I complained, "Trying to get opinions from you makes me feel like a dentist pulling teeth."

Tazuko responded mildly, "Susie, I don't speak in Japanese, either." Her comment was a gift to me: a clue, a glimpse into a different mentality. It was as if Tazuko had wiped a smudged pane of glass clean for me, freeing me from a limitation in my own perception. My students' silence taught me that a relentlessly linear communicative style, such as direct questioning related to teacher-chosen topics, can fail to engage language learners.

Topic Cards

Increasingly, I experiment with oblique approaches designed to encourage rapport. Wanting to

discover what goes in students' minds led me to "topic cards," which contain one or more words and/or a sketch to serve as something to talk about. Passing out three 5"x8" white index cards to each student, I suggest that everyone complete three. Although I love color, I ask the students to use only a black pen or to go over their design if they first use a pencil, so that when I xerox the cards, the graphics will be clear and bold. My own favorite pen is a fine-line Expresso, which has a polymer point and a smooth, fluid feel. It is available at pharmacies and stationer's for about $1.25. Felt-tip pens and rolling writers also suffice.

Generally, when I ask my students to design topic cards, they ask, "About what?"

"About anything you want to talk about," I reply. "The sky's the limit." At this point I give an example of a topic that a student from another class came up with that had some sort of universal appeal, such as "Insomnia" or "What's the most important thing in life?" I avoid making up my own example, because I want to discover the students' agenda, not impose my own. I tell my students something to this effect: "If you think your topic is interesting, probably somebody else will, too. You don't have to make a speech about your topic. You're just opening up the conversation by suggesting a theme. Maybe you want to know your classmates' ideas on a particular subject. You can write a word, a phrase or question on your card. If you want, you can draw a picture on your card or find someone else to illustrate your idea."

After collecting a set of cards done in class or at home, I reproduce them on cardstock (heavy paper) because I want to "give weight" to what students say. I prefer cream-colored cardstock for its warmth, and because black lines are highly visible against it; any light background will do. With large classes, multiple sets of student designs are essential. Everyone must be able to see and handle them. The teacher should not hold all the cards, either literally or metaphorically.

Windows to Joy, Sadness and Anger

Topic cards—which I often refer to as "pictographs"—have many purposes. They introduce a wide range of topics into classroom dialogue, yet build unity by suggesting connecting themes. While graphics created by students vary in style (ranging from stick figures to geometric and curvilinear designs), they tend to overlap conceptually. For example, food, recreation, separation, and supernatural phenomena are recurring themes.

It is vital to find common ground in the international classroom, as well as to honor divergent viewpoints. Topic cards serve not only as effective ice-breakers but can open windows to subtle but powerful conflicts. As such, they provide emotional release that is sometimes vital to cultural adaptation. People far from home may feel cut off from everything familiar and comforting. They need an opportunity to express painful emotions without feeling even more alone or overwhelmed. Drawing and captioning tasks allow students to give form to joy, sadness and anger in a socially acceptable manner.

One group of students seemed happiest while discussing their national food. A Frenchman rhapsodized about the fresh loaves of bread people carry in their bicycle baskets in Paris. A card about dating inspired a hilarious game of charades in which a Venezuelan "Cinderella" danced around the classroom with her Japanese "prince." Hardly missing a beat, she stepped out of her shoe, casually indicating the loss of the glass slipper. The students also suggested a game they called "statistics," in which a leader stood in front of the class asking questions related to the cards' personal themes. The other students and I wrote "yes," "no," or "pass" on individual blank cards that were collected and then tallied on the blackboard.

Graphic design offers economy of expression and visual imagery conducive to free association. Balloon speech and thought clouds are epigrammatic, allowing students to use both visual and verbal skills. Art Spiegelman, Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist and author, told a journalist from *The Boston Globe Magazine*, "...there's something about the way comics work that approximates the way the mind works, with streamlined images combined with the abstraction of words" (June 24, 1990).

Thinking in English

Designing cards helps students begin to think in English. Students in a mixed-nationality classroom struggle to understand the vocabulary, syntax and accented English of their classmates. However, they quickly "tune in" to phrases and pictures appearing on a wide variety of topic cards. In *Art as Image and Idea*, Edmund Burke Feldman (1967) expresses a closely related principle:

> Simplicity and logic are the dominant traits which emerge from the successful solution of problems in information design. Visual simplicity implies a bias in favor of bold, abstract forms—forms which are easily visible, quickly identifiable, and capable of rich, symbolic meaning. By logic I mean a sense of connectedness among the elements of the total design: the product or idea; the pictorial or other visual material; and the caption, copy, or other verbal material. (p. 64)

A Responsive Class

After collecting my first set of pictographs, I took them home and studied them. I was excited by the visual imagery and array of topics. Looking them over again on my lunch break at school, I resisted the impulse to correct grammar and spelling mistakes. If I reworked the cards, I decided, they would lose some of their original power. They were more effective learning tools left untouched. My next inclination was to categorize the cards by subject. I put all the cards into several piles, impressed by the connecting threads: travel and culture, social issues, personal relationships and philosophical questions. Then I thought, "Why am I doing this?" and rearranged the cards in random order. When I went to class, I complimented the students as a whole on their work and wrote these instructions on the board:

1. Divide into groups.
2. Look at, enjoy, and talk about the cards.
3. Make a mental note of grammar and spelling corrections or write them on a separate piece of paper. Write a title for each subject.
4. Discuss 5 ways of using these cards in learning activities or games and write them down.

I wrote number two, above, because my students need explicit directions, while the most traditional ones actually need permission to have fun. I wanted to make sure my students allowed themselves to appreciate their own work and that of their classmates.The students divided into several groups, and I passed out an identical set of cards to each cluster. The response to the cards was electric. I circulated among the groups, hearing animated discussions of grammar points, ways to categorize the cards and, of course, the content of the cards themselves.

Josef, Yoko, Jin and Charlotte

ESL students may experience intercultural conflicts with their classmates and or/teacher. In one of my larger reading classes, the wide disparity in English proficiency and modes of relating caused stress. When we discussed a text, communication was far from smooth. Josef, a young man from the Czech Republic, made aggressive jokes at other students' expense. "Speak English!" he called across the room, not having understood a Japanese woman's accented English. Yoko, who had been trying to express her idea about a reading, remained silent for the rest of the period. I asked Josef and Yoko to stay after class and talk, asking each one what was needed from the other. Yoko told Josef to be kind; he asked her to speak more loudly in class. It suddenly occurred to me that this strapping, blue-eyed blonde Czech might feel out of place surrounded by the more delicately built, soft-spoken Asians who comprised the majority of his classmates.

"Josef," I asked, "do you feel isolated?"

"What does that mean?" he replied.

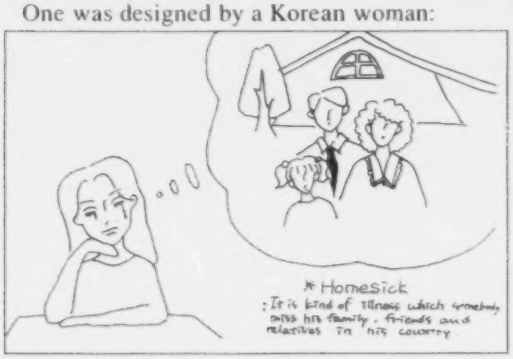
"Alone," I explained.

"Yes," he answered.

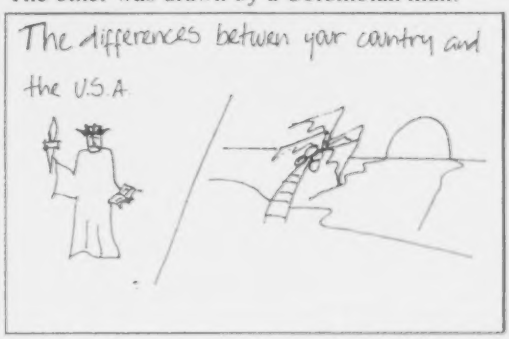
Josef's topic card showed a stick figure hanging from a gallows. He had labeled the figure "Jin," the name of a male Korean classmate whom he liked.[1]

I chose two cards from this class for a writing assignment.

One was designed by a Korean woman:



The other was drawn by a Colombian man:



I xeroxed each card on 8" x 11" paper and distributed copies to my students and asked them to write about either topic. The woman who had introduced the topic of homesickness chose to write about the differences between Korea and the States. After reading her upbeat, tolerant composition to the class, she received a lot of positive feedback. Later, a student—whom we will call Charlotte—read her essay, in which she denied feeling homesick. She explained that she had left home in her teens to study and had become used to separation from her parents.

Then I asked my students to write responses to the compositions that were read in class. Josef's response began, "Charlotte is strong girl because she doesn't feel homesick, but I am weak man..." He went on to say that he missed his family and friends, that everything was better back home, and that he looked forward to visiting the Czech Republic at Christmas. I asked Josef to read his response to the group, and he did so, omitting the part in which he called himself weak. Jin commented that Josef was like a child. "Once you choose your direction, you have to stick to it."

I said, "I'm 44 years old, and I still miss my mother, even though she lives in Boston, not that far away." The students pressed me to continue. I told them I missed my brothers but "carry them in my heart." I added that it was difficult to let go of students time after time, that we are continually losing and gaining in life.

As in any community, a curious symbiosis exists in the classroom, in which one member may speak for others. This connection may be particularly dramatic in an international group in which English skills vary. I was grateful to my student who had drawn the homesick student weeping at her desk; it allowed Josef to air his grievance.

Josef relaxed after that meeting. The students and I bonded. Jin and Josef eventually became roommates. As Jin wrote in an essay, "Humans have as many feelings as stars in the night sky. We feel happiness, sorrow, anger, shame, doubt, jealousy and joy...Love is born from sympathy, and sympathy is based on sorrow."

Thinking about the inevitable separation from my students, I wrote the following and read it to my class:

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[1] *Why did Josef draw a ghoulish picture? Perhaps he both liked and feared intelligent, detached Jin at the beginning of the quarter. Labeling his hangman's victim "Jin," Josef expresed his ambivalence: interest in his classmate as well as hostility. In some ways, Josef and Jin were opposites. A professional tennis player, Josef was outspoken and emotional. He asked me to bring colorfully illustrated sightseeing and geography books to show the class. Jin, on the other hand, was intellectual, with a poetic sensibility. He asked for articles from* Time *magazine to study. Jin may have smiled at the antisocial, graffiti-style card because he was not threatened by Josef's "bad boy" response to my assignment. Maybe he found Josef's negative attention amusing—as long as it was kept "in the family" (within the confines of our class). My guess is that each young man secretly admired qualities the other had. Since Jin was one of the most appealing and articulate members of class with little need of my protection, I did not delete Josef's drawing from the pack of student cards. Jin later asked me not to show Josef's card to a teachers-in-training class I had to address at the College of Education.*

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Teacher '94

We are the gypsies
The make-shift
Families

The oasis, the
Campground

The conduit

Before dawn
My children are gone

Left weeping
Blood
Seeping

But a thousand seeds
Sown
Spring up 'round the world.

Mansour

The students' cards also help them communicate spiritual sensibility for which they have few words, at least in English. I knew very little about my student from Yemen, Mansour, except that his attendance was sporadic and that he had trouble keeping up with his classmates due to his limited vocabulary. During one quarter at the University, he had suffered greatly when he temporarily could not reach his family in Yemen due to civil strife there. The next quarter, his life had stabilized as things back home calmed down. Here is the card he designed (it reads: "You ar very rich"):

I puzzled over his design for about a week, not sure if I understood it or not. Then something clicked. In response to his captioned picture, I wrote:

Artists

Know something
They can't explain

About the nature of
loss and pain

And riches falling from
Heaven like rain.

When we discussed his card in class, someone suggested that Mansour had drawn rain because Yemen is a dry country. Mansour explained his idea very simply: God gives us water, and that makes plants; animals eat plants. We eat the animals, and that gives us life. "You are very rich," he repeated as if stating the obvious, while gesturing with the palms of his hands upturned.

Students are growing and changing, whether they are aware of the process or not. I want a chance to delve beneath the surface of their busy lives and record some of the changes. Interweaving student designs into my teaching gives me such an opportunity. The cards offer a glimpse into my students' inner worlds and enrich my classes.

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Writing in Music

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by Sharon Myers

Writing is an act of imagination. It is a concentrated inner dialogue calling on memory, logic, and creative visualization. It was never meant to be a social activity. It certainly wasn't meant to be pursued in tightly structured time sequences, elbow-to-elbow in crowded rooms, on stiff wood and metal chairs with small writing surfaces.

I have been teaching academic ESL composition for seven years now and have had great success using music in my conference-centered courses. Initially, I brought music into the classroom with a vague notion of "relaxing" the students. It does, too. It seems to disarm students of some defenses (Krashen's affective barriers?) and in all but the most intransigent cases, diminishes crankiness. Lozanov may or may not be correct in his conviction that music fixes information in a more receptive brain, but there is no doubt that it has the power to put people in a better mood. A class in a good mood is much easier to work with than a class indifferent or numb from lectures, sleep deprivation, culture shock, and endless wrestling matches with a new language.

A Place to Go

After a few semesters, however, I began to realize that the greatest value of the music to enhance writing in the class was not in its affective power, but in its isolating power. That is, music is a place to go. It gives students a dimension in which to escape the crowded room and carry on the inner dialogue. In this sense, music makes writing in a classroom more natural than it is otherwise.

Music Encourages Quiet

There are other effects. Not least is that auditory distractions—clocks, hallway noise, whispering, the drone of air conditioning systems, growling stomachs, generalized classroom shuffling—are blurred over, so that it is easier to concentrate. I have found that the social urge to talk appears to be less compelling among students when music is playing, perhaps because each student is more acutely aware of talk as an interruption in the steady current of the music as opposed to the choppier give and take of typical classroom presentations.

My standard writing class begins slightly early. I bring in a boom box (quality matters), and begin the music immediately, even before I take off my coat. While I shuffle papers and set up, students are drifting in. In this way, the class assembles inside the music. At least on that one plane, we are all together when the class starts. I lay whatever homework I have to return to them on a desk at the front of the class. They come and identify their papers and take them back to their desks. People are coming and going to the front of the room like this for a little bit, and others are examining their papers, and I am marking roll, and all this is going on in a relaxed way in the music.

Following roll, I press the pause button on the music. After a while, it comes automatically to do this in some natural break or valley in a melody so that it is not a jarring transition. Then I launch into whatever topic of instruction is on the day's menu, be it syntax or citation conventions or talking up an assignment. There is a conventional question and answer period. I try not to let this go over twenty minutes. At the end of the collective instruction period, I press the pause button again, the music resumes, and the students write. I usually give them time to sort themselves out before the conferencing begins, so this is the ideal time to write the homework assignment on the board.

Music Unites Us

Then I walk among the students so that each person has an opportunity to ask me for instruction or signal, by ignoring me, to leave him or her alone. For those who want instruction, I will give it softly, sometimes bending over, writing with a pencil directly on the student's paper (or simply talking softly to the student) while the student is seated. The music seems to make it relatively easy for the others to tune this out. If my comments are lengthy, I have the student come up to my table at the front and we put our heads together up there.

If the tape runs out, I turn it over. The music continues. The writing continues. If no one seeks instruction, I seek the ones I know need it, and conference with them directly, at their desks or mine. There is a rhythm to this, as there is to all classes: a kinesthetic sense modulated in whatever rapport one can establish with students, collectively or individually. The music smooths motion as well as emotion. Just before the end of the class hour, I pause the music, draw their attention to the homework assignment and clarify any questions about it. When the questions are answered, I push the pause button to renew the sound, and the class disperses in music.

New-Age Music Works Well

I am always asked, what music? No one could agree on what music to play, surely. There would always be somebody in the class who would be annoyed. And how could you ask that person to write with his or her senses being grated by some unwelcome music. In fact, I simply announce at the first class (after pausing the tape), that this will be a class in which there will be music. I promise them that the music will not be at a high volume and that they will like it. This is the power of suggestion, straight out of Lozanov again. I assure them that they should let me know if it annoys them, but don't suggest for a minute that I think it might.

The music that seems to work best is "New Age" music. Much of this music is beautiful, and at the very least it can be tuned into or out of without a great deal of difficulty. Piano solos, some classical guitar music, Celtic harp, or softly played chorals in a language nobody in the class understands (Norwegian; Finnish; Bulgarian) are only a few kinds of music which can be played to good effect. Volume is crucial, but again, a feel for this comes with time. It is important to play something different each time, too. I found the answer to this by using tapes available at the public library while I slowly built up my own "writing class collection" of music.

High Evaluations

In the years I have been using music in this way, these classes have consistently received high student evaluations. This has been true in culturally heterogenous classes at the University of Washington, Florida State University, and Texas Tech University. Only two students ever reported that the music annoyed them. Both turned out to be individuals who wanted to control not only the music, but just about every other aspect of the class as well. Most students respond with smiles between long gazes, going in and out of themselves in the process of composing.

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Novels and Films: A Dynamic Double Feature

Previously an archeologist, Leslie Criston returned to the University of Arizona for her M.A. in ESL. Having taught in Brazil and at Saint Joseph's University, Vanderbilt University, and Harvard University, Ms. Criston is currently on the ESL faculty at the University of Delaware's English Language Institute. She has a particular interest in teaching through content and in developing and learning about new ways to get students to explore their own creativity as they learn English.

by Leslie Criston

> *In the information age it is cinemas, not books, that bring fiction to the largest audience. Movies have become the short stories of the video age.*
>
> Frank Price, Colombia Pictures

While many of my students gained their first experience of American culture through entertainment, namely movies and music, very few of them had ever read an American novel. It seemed that perhaps an obvious way to deal with this was to use the existing love of films to ignite a love of reading. I'm surely not the first to couple novels and their film versions: I remember reading *Mutiny on the Bounty* in seventh grade and then watching the movie. However, in teaching a "Novels and Films" course, I didn't want to simply repeat the process of having students read the book and then watch the movie. Acknowledging that I had to meet reading-skill objectives, I also had the hidden agenda of wanting to involve my students in the "art process" by creating activities that would make them responsible for the way that they experience art forms, in this case the art of writing novels and creating films. The activities I developed attempted to "pull" the student in and out of the observer/critical and participant/creative mode.

Background of the Course

The course was designed for pre-academic advanced ESL students. The length of the course varies from four to six weeks, one hour per day, five days per week. The novel, which is the primary text, is chosen based on student interests and on the movie ratings. After narrowing their choices down to three, the students then vote for the one to be used. The good news here is that there are a lot of great books and films to choose from. *Lord of the Flies*, *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *West Side Story* are among my favorites. Over half of the movies that won an Academy Award for Best Picture were based on novels or biographies. To name a few: *Ben Hur*, *The Silence of the Lambs*, *Out of Africa*, and *Dances with Wolves*. What's more, movie studios are buying book rights before the book is a best-seller and then promoting it until it is a best seller! For example, John Grisham's *The Firm* was rejected by four publishing companies before it was accepted by Paramount Pictures for $350,000 as an initial payment. The book then got the attention of Doubleday publishers, which helped it climb to a best-seller and generate an audience for the later film version.

A Springboard for Comparison

There is one aspect of the class that I feel fairly adamant about: that reading the novel must precede watching the film. Failing to read the novel first robs the students of creating their own "mind movie." The students must see that their own "movie version" is as valid as the film director's. In fact, it is the students who will use this version to critique the film of the novel, by questioning how true the film director was to his source. This enables students to view themselves as part of the art process. Reading the novel first also implicitly communicates that the original art form, and the very foundation of the film version in this case, is that of the written word, not the visual interpretation of it. What I have found to be true is that when critiquing the film version, the students remain very loyal to the written expression and begin to "see" the film differently. In short, the three artistic versions—the author's, the student's and the film director's—create a wonderful triangle, a perfect springboard for a lot of comparison and contrast.

Activities to Stimulate Communication

With all of that in mind, let me now share some of the activities used to stimulate communication.

All of these focus on holding the students responsible for what they have read in the novel and seen in the film.

Assuming Roles–Assume the role of a specific character in the novel. Write a letter to the film's director/screenwriter expressing your opinion of how well or poorly you were portrayed in the film. Comment on the casting director's choice of the actor who played you in the movie version. Language Focus: Remain "in character" by using the words and expressions that your character would use. Choose an appropriate tone for your letter.

Working in Pairs–Select a partner. Choose one scene from the book that was also in the movie. Read the passage several times. Then view the scene several times. One partner will defend the positive way in which the director and actors interpreted the passage. The other partner will make concessions when possible and then refute the opinion of his partner by pointing out the weaknesses in the director's and actor's ability to interpret the passage. Language focus: expressing opinion, disagreeing, making concessions, analyzing, summarizing.

Considering Music–Music is a powerful tool that is available to the director. How does it contribute to the experience of watching a movie? Can you recall the music from these movies memorable movies: *Jaws, Psycho, The Graduate, 2001: A Space Odyssey*? Can you describe what was happening in a particular scene? Can you hum a few bars? Can you name the instruments? How does a director use music to convey a feeling or message? To create tension? To move from one scene to another? Choose a scene from the movie. Watch the scene several times with others in your group; then listen to it without watching it. Describe the music in terms of speed, tempo, instruments, melody, and mood. Describe in as much detail as possible how the director uses music to assist in creating the mood and message of the scene. In your opinion, was the music appropriately chosen?

Considering Language–You have explored the ways in which film directors use music as an artistic tool in conveying their messages. What are the ways that writers convey mood? Consider vocabulary, writing style, sentence length, etc. How do writers move their audience from one scene or chapter to another? Consider how one chapter ends and another begins. Does the writer use chapter titles or numbers, drawings or other types of visual art? How do writers express the theme of a passage or chapter? Is there repetition of an idea or a phrase that ties parts of a particular chapter together in content or theme? Is there a lesson that is learned or a conflict that is dealt with by a character through his actions or thoughts? Does this indicate the author's attempt to develop a theme?

Point of View–A writer expresses ideas through the characters in a novel and by using a particular point of view. This enables the writer and reader to get "inside" the mind of the characters. Does a film director have the same options available? What artistic "tools" might a film director use when interpreting a novel written in first person? Does the director give more visual attention to the central character from such a novel? In what ways might the director be limited? For example, can a director give much detail to the inward verbal thoughts of a character within the time constraints of a movie? In what ways does a director have fewer limitations? How does the director visually create the point of view? Consider camera angles.

Omitted Scenes–Many times, due to the time element, a film director is forced to omit certain parts of the novel's story line. What, if any, were the parts of the book that the film director omitted? Select one part that you feel was unjustly omitted from the film. Write a letter to the director expressing why you feel the part should not have been omitted? Explain and support your answer. Language: using convincing language; supporting opinion with detail.

Writing Reviews–Write a film review. Give a short summary of the plot and highlight any obvious strengths or weaknesses. How many stars would you give the movie? How would you rate the movie? (PG-Parental Guidance-children under 13 must be accompanied by an adult; R-Restricted-no one under 17 admitted without an adult; G-General Audience of any age, etc.) Find another person in the class who disagrees with your opinion. Discuss your opinion with this person and defend your opinion with examples from the movie. Disagree with your partner's opinion in a way that is accept-

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able and concede on points that you can. Compare your book/movie review with a published book review from a local or national newspaper. Are there similarities/differences between your review and that of the reviewer? Read each to another person in the class and ask whose review he/she agrees with and why. Language focus: expressing opinion; describing; making concessions.

A multitude of language skills can be developed through the use of film, according to Ms. Criston (right).

Creating Surveys–Form a group of 3-4 class members. Create a survey which determines the percentage of Americans who 1) read novels and watch their film versions, 2) only watch the film versions of books, 3) only read books made into movies. On the survey, you should also include questions about the age and gender and occupation of the survey-taker. Have 30 people take the survey. Tally up each of the three main categories listed above and create a visual representation of each category using a pie chart. Share your own group findings with the rest of the group and collate your answers with the rest of the members in your class. Compare the results. Which group had the highest percentage? From your results, how do you think that age was related to the results? What age group had the highest number of people who read novels and watch their films? Who only watch movies? How does gender factor into the results? Are there more females or males in each category? What might be some reasons for having more men/women in each of the categories? In what ways could your survey be made more reliable? What other questions would you like to ask Americans about their film-watching, book-reading behavior? Discuss these ideas with your group.

Movies Preceding Books–Research how many books are now being written after the film version has been made. How might these books be different from books that were not written from amovie version? There are plenty of novels that can be adapted into films. What are some possible reasons that novels are written after the film has been made? In your opinion, do novels or movies better convey the message of the novelist? Support your answer. Prepare arguments for both sides.

Comparing and Contrasting–After reflecting on all that we have analyzed in this course, write a composition explaining what you have personally have learned by reading this novel and comparing/contrasting it with its film version. Consider how you have involved your own "version" in this class. How would the experience have been different had you seen the film first?

Conclusion

Through my own teaching experience and by having other educators share their ideas with me, I have collected many activities that have worked successfully in this course. I have experimented with these activities, keeping those that seemed successful. I wasn't quite sure how to measure the success until one day a student approached me and said, "Before this class, I didn't like to read, even in my native language. Now I look forward to reading each night. I feel that I have something to contribute to what I read." Of course not all students felt this way. While I know that I can't change anyone's feelings about reading, I realized from this student's opinion that perhaps the element that was vital in determining whether an activity was successful or not was that of empowerment. If I could provide materials that demanded that students view themselves as vital to the process of art, then they had no way out—they individually were responsible for their experience and how their experience influenced the art. Validating their experience, I hoped, would empower them to apply this experience to learning in general.

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Getting Imaginative in the Language Laboratory

by Darci L. Strother

Dr. Darci L. Strother is Assistant Professor of Foreign Languages (Spanish) at California State University San Marcos. She has presented papers at numerous conferences throughout the United States, and has published articles in scholarly journals such as Romance Notes, Cervantes, *and the* Bulletin of the Comediantes. *In addition to her experience teaching Spanish, Dr. Strother has taught ESL in Spain, New York City, and at Harvard University.*

One of the legacies left behind by the Audio-Lingual Method of language teaching is the notion that a language laboratory is a place where human beings sit in tiny, partitioned cubicles, and endlessly repeat nonsequiturs until their pronunciation of the language studied reaches perfection. Although language professionals in the 80's and 90's have done much to bring the sparkle of creativity into the language classroom thanks to the wave of new communicative methodologies, the language laboratory is still too often viewed as a place to send students for repetitious, "drill-and-kill" activities. However, a number of recent events signal that a revolution for users of language laboratories (both students and instructors) is underway. Across the country, schools, colleges, and universities are renaming their facilities to reflect their new role in language education. Signs on doors that used to read "Language Laboratory" now boast names such as "Humanities Instructional Resource Center" (University of California, Irvine), "Multimedia Foreign Language Center" (Millersville University), and "Language Technology Center" (University of Colorado). Once those doors are opened, the changes which are taking place are apparent inside the lab, as well. Increasingly, computers, video cassette and laser disk players, and other forms of new technology are finding their way into labs and curricula.[1] Language instructors, in their mission to inspire and challenge students preparing to interact with others in the 21st century, are taking advantage of the expanded possibilities offered by the emerging technologies, while at the same time rethinking the role of more traditional classroom technology, such as the tape recorder and the overhead projector.

Old Technology, New Ways

The emphasis on technology in language learning/teaching can often place at an unfortunate disadvantage those whose educational institutions do not enjoy the generous funding necessary to purchase such technology. It is important to keep in mind, however, that many effective and creative activities can be developed by thinking about old technology in new ways. The activity which will be described in the following pages is one that can be carried out in a minimally-equipped laboratory, for it requires only that the students have access to the "record" and "playback" functions of an audio cassette player.

Several years ago, while teaching an intermediate-level college Spanish class, I asked my students to research a Spanish-speaking country, and to prepare their reports on audio tapes which their classmates would listen to in the language laboratory. Although I thought the activity was creative and full of potential, on lab day I was disheartened to see that most of the students' projects were reminiscent of the report I wrote on the state of Nevada in the fourth grade. They all told about the geography, the population, the colors of the flag, and the capitol of the country they had chosen; but the language they used had not been internalized, for it was not their own, and it was not relevant to their interests. In fact, on examination of the written version of their reports, I discovered that one young lady had written her report entirely in flawless Portuguese, which she must have assumed was Spanish when she grabbed an encyclopedia off the library shelf to copy from!

There was, however, one particular report that stood out from all the others, and inspired me to recycle this activity. After extensive study of the Central-American country he had chosen, the student in question wrote an imaginary field-interview between the television commentator Geraldo Rivera and

[1] *Additional evidence of the new role of language laboratories can be found in abundance by perusing any recent issue of* The IALL Journal of Language Learning Technologies. *Other publications put out by the International Association for Learning Laboratories which also serve as excellent sources for pedagogical ideas include Stone (1988) and Stone (1993).*

some rebel guerrillas, in which subjects such as the country's topography, political system, and day-to-day life were included. The student had sought out the help of his fraternity brothers, who made background sounds of jungle animals, gunfire, and helicopters, while he recorded his report. The result was magnificent!

The Role of Imagination

It became immediately apparent to me that the missing ingredient in this activity had been imagination. While I might have preferred that my students think creatively in doing their reports, the fact that university students are so rarely asked to allow their imaginations free reign makes it necessary to give them explicit instructions that it is okay to do so.[2] In subsequent semesters, I have modified this student-centered cultural activity in some significant ways. First, I play the model tape of the above-mentioned student, then brainstorm with the class to generate other possible topics. At this point, there is normally an opening of a positive "Pandora's box" as students begin to see that they are not limited to the traditional "academic" method of reporting information, but rather can let their imaginations guide them. Once students get away from talking about the country from the third-person stance, and imagine that they are actually a member of the society they chose to study, their reports increase in significance, quality, and interest.

In recent semesters, my students have produced audio tapes in which they adopted roles such as a sportscaster at a Dominican baseball game, a chef at an exclusive restaurant in Buenos Aires, a DJ for a Puerto Rican radio station, the wife of a Spanish bullfighter complaining about her husband's dangerous profession, and a tour guide on a journey to the Galapagos Islands. Not only do students gain valuable language skills when producing their reports by combining factual information with imaginative narration, but as they move from station to station in the language laboratory, listening to the tapes produced by their classmates, they are also treated to a virtual trip around the Spanish-speaking world, full of music, sound effects, and imaginative stories. This assignment, which used to cause students to rely mainly on encyclopedias, now has my students scurrying to interview native speakers, hounding local travel agents for information and color brochures, combing libraries and music stores for sound effects, and pestering friends and relatives to loan them souvenirs and other articles to place on display at their station.[3] Motivation is increased, learning is enhanced, and the language is internalized.

Suggested Steps

The following are suggestions for those wishing to try out this activity:

Preparation:

- Decide on the geographical areas to be covered (Different countries in which the target language is spoken? The states, provinces, or cities of one particular country?)
- Present the idea to the class using a model tape (if available); brainstorm possible topics with class.
- Allow students to choose (or assign for them) the particular area they will research.
- Distribute blank "loaner" tapes (or ask that students provide their own) at least one week before the scheduled lab day, so students can do their recording prior to lab day.
- Have students hand in a written draft or drafts several class periods before lab day, to allow for suggestions/modifications.

On Lab Day:

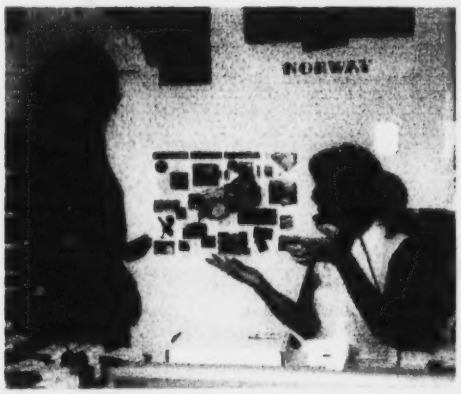
- Allow students several minutes to set up their stations (arrange maps, pictures, articles on desktop, check and cue tape, etc.).
- Set a goal. Students might be asked to answer written or recorded questions at each station,

[2] *As Moskowitz (1994) discusses, the barrenness of the walls of most university classrooms tends to reinforce this perception.*

[3] *Students with access to the Internet and a World Wide Web browser can also gather an amazing variety of information about cities and countries, many times in the language of that country. A good place to start is at the following web site: http://www.city.net. Also see Backer (1994) for additional sources for electronically-accessed information pertaining to foreign languages and cultures.*

identify on a blank map the countries/states/cities they "visit," or draw a picture depicting what they hear at each station. Students may be provided with a mock passport which the instructor stamps each time they successfully complete a "visit" to a station, etc.

- Instruct students to move from station to station during the class period, to listen to and gather as much information as possible. Encourage students to decide for themselves whether they wish to listen extensively or intensively, and to move around at their own pace.
- Collect and comment on any tasks assigned to students.



Dr. Strother (right) helps a student to harness what she terms "the endless powers of the imagination."

Follow-Up:

- Provide some type of feedback at the conclusion of this activity or in the following class period. Students might vote on categories such as "most creative," "best sound effects," "country I'd most like to visit," etc.
- For instructors wishing to grade this activity, a holistic grading system provides a good measure of student learning/achievement. This might take into account the student's written draft, oral production on tape, creativity and preparation, and completion of the designated tasks set out on lab day.

Benefits of Activity

This type of activity is ideal for students enrolled in a general skills language class, because it reinforces listening, speaking, writing and reading in the target language. From a practical standpoint, the facilities of the language laboratory make it possible to have much more information presented during a single class period than would be the case if students were to do individual oral reports. This model also breaks away from the concept of "instructor as knower, learner as recipient of knowledge" and makes students directly responsible for what will be learned. But more importantly, students are exposed to a wide variety of cultural information which is motivating, engaging, and creative. Many scholars have discussed the close link between language and culture (Scarcella and Oxford, 1992, pp. 183-185). Yet Omaggio (1993) has noted that, despite the importance of cultural competency to a student's ability to use a language proficiently, "many language courses today still do not include the systematic study of culture" (p. 357). This activity addresses the critical need to provide students with such study. By harnessing the endless powers of students' imaginations, the study of culture can be incorporated into the language classroom in an innovative manner, paving the way for successful learning.

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Creating Theater in the ESL Classroom

Maria Guida is an adjunct assistant professor of ESL at the American Language Institute at New York University and has presented teacher-training workshops on the subject of theater for many conferences and graduate programs. For fifteen years, she worked as a professional actress and singer on Broadway and television and in regional theater and jazz clubs.

by Maria Guida

From the moment I began teaching ESL, I was convinced that using theater in the classroom would be a powerful way to help non-native speakers improve their English proficiency and deepen their understanding of American culture. I began to adapt exercises and games that have traditionally been used to train actors—techniques which are designed to free the body, develop imagination and emotional expression, and strengthen the ability to improvise with language. I continued this work with my classes at the American Language Institute at New York University, and it was there that I was given the opportunity to create a comprehensive theater course as one of our content-based electives in the Intensive ESL Program. Each semester, theater games, acting improvisation, and rehearsal culminate in student performances of a play, and we videotape the final performance in front of a live audience.

The Design

Before each semester begins, I decide upon one play which will be our focus for the whole semester. For ESL classes, I look for a number of things in a play:

1. Subject matter and its potential relevance to the students' lives and interests;
2. Ample supply of two-character scenes (scenes with three or more characters are particularly challenging to rehearse and perform);
3. A dialogue style which will be manageable to read; and
4. Vocabulary. The playscript and the vocabulary list I create become the "textbooks" for the whole course.

Each class session includes all of the following:

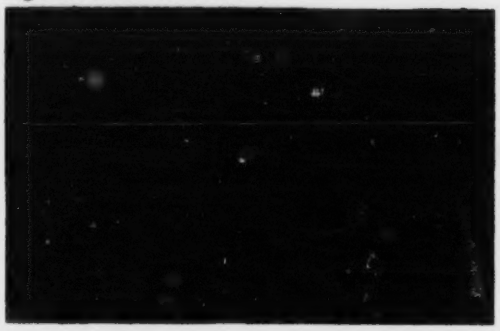
1. Theater games for verbal and physical warm-up to free the body and imagination;
2. Short improvisations;
3. Reading of the script aloud as a group; and
4. Class discussion of the play's plot, characters, and important themes. In addition, students write about these same elements of drama in class and for homework. An entire class session is set aside each week for the sole purpose of improvisation, so that students get early and continuous experience improvising for a full ten minutes in front of the class. It is only after six weeks of theater games, improvisations and reading, writing, and discussion of the play that I assign each student a scene and a scene partner; then rehearsal for performance begins.

Theater Games and Improvisation

Theater games and improvisations are integral to the course; they stimulate natural creativity, decrease anxiety, help develop fluency, and discourage the mechanical use of language. I have found that even students who have been hesitant to speak up in a group join in the spirit of fun and creativity, and often become real "talkers." There are many books which can guide you to theater games, most of which are highly adaptable. I like activities which develop sensory awareness and powers of observation, provide tasks for problem solving and conflict resolution, develop emotional expression, enhance storytelling skills, and help students to explore body language and build a character physically.

In improvisation, students speak and interact in the persona of a given character—they "become" a doctor who cares deeply about her patients, a teenager who is angry with the world, a soldier who is tired of fighting. Improvisation is a natural outgrowth of theater games. I discourage students from planning dialogue: when I give them planning time, they decide only who their characters are, where

they are, and the situation/conflict (very simply stated). Students are allowed to plan only the *beginning* of an improvisation, and it ends only when I say "Relax." The development evolves in front of the audience and should surprise the actors themselves; improvisation is a journey into the unknown. I find that it really helps students gain the courage to take greater risks with language. Most students are amazed by how well they are able to express themselves with little preparation and to create interesting and exciting theater. Here are two fun ways to stimulate improvisation which have worked well in my classes:



Ms. Guida (second left) has created a theater course in ESL at New York University.

Stimulating Improvisation

1. I ask students to bring to class a small assortment of photographs and pictures from newspapers, magazines, or any other source. There should be two people together in the picture (age and gender can vary). After students choose a partner, we place all the pictures in the center of the room, and each pair of students chooses a picture. (Two female partners should choose a picture with two females in it; a male/female partnership should choose one with a male and female in it, etc.) The picture now suggests to the students their characters and the setting for the improvisation; it becomes the springboard for imagination and creation of situation/conflict. After each improvisation, the whole class sees the original picture, and we are all consistantly delighted by the students' inventiveness!
2. Students brainstorm other possible settings for the characters in the play we are currently reading. I ask them to think about where else the playwright could have placed these characters, and in what other pairings. Students then write down only the names of two of the play's characters and a brand new setting. I collect these papers and shuffle them. Students choose partners, and I let one student from each pair choose a paper. This is all the information they get, and they have no more than three minutes to come up with a situation/conflict for improvisation. Their understanding of the play's characters and their imaginations give the students all they need in order to improvise brand new (and very plausible) scenes that the playwright never wrote.

Time and again, rich language emerges. Students love bringing to life the characters they have been studying, and those who are watching are usually very excited by their classmates' acting. A beautiful spirit develops in the classroom. After one semester in the Theater Workshop, a student from Japan wrote about her experience: "In the Theater Workshop, all the students' relationship is very tight. I really appreciate doing improvisations because they teach me how to trust other people. I've never trusted people in such a short period of time before."

The Rehearsal Process

All great acting, no matter who is doing it, creates the feeling of improvisation—the feeling that everything the audience is seeing is happening right now, for the very first time ever. This is why many actors improvise frequently when rehearsing a script, even when doing films.The rehearsal process for my ESL students is daily improvisation on an assigned scene from our play. The process I have devised is designed to discourage rote memorization of dialogue. Students are required to improvise and paraphrase daily, so that their imaginations and creativity as characters in a specific situation can flourish . At the same time, they are exploring and practicing language functions, speech levels, body language, and everything else we do in conversation. Whether or not the students actually say the playwright' s exact words in the final performance is of little importance.

In pairs, students read their scene aloud and then divide it into "beats" (topics of conversation), identifying in only a few words what each beat is about. Students then write a Beat List; under the identification of each beat, the student writes four or five key words or phrases (*not* dialogue from the script!) which will "trigger" her own actions inside that beat. I circulate to assist each pair. This work gives students continued practice of negotiating and interpreting meanings, summarizing, paraphras-

ing, sequencing, and prioritizing. Students now see the framework of the scene, and it is this framework which allows them to improvise in a way which is faithful to the play. The brief Beat Notes that evolve from this process are now the working script. Whenever students get "stuck" improvising, they consult only their Beat Notes for guidance.

I begin to work privately with each individual scene, while the rest of the class rehearses in pairs. I try to "direct" the students as little as possible; my main function is to point out things which move the scene along truthfully and those things which steer the action too far from the playwright's original intention. Students are making choices about the ways that character, situation, and motivation affect their body language and speech level. In the final stages of rehearsal, I give notes on grammar and pronunciation.

Theater deepens students' understanding of language and of themselves, says Ms. Guida.

Performance and Beyond

Usually, by the time performance week arrives, the feeling in the class is similar to that of a little acting company. I am always moved by the students' generosity toward each other. If a costume, prop, or set piece is important to one scene, but those actors cannot supply it, another student invariably offers help. It becomes a group effort, and everyone works for the good of the presentation as a whole.

Each semester, I schedule two performances which are attended by other ESL classes and their professors at the Institute and by students' friends and families. The second performance is videotaped, and the class then views the tape and discusses the work. These performances have been consistently outstanding, and the students usually marvel at their progress.

I love teaching the Theater Workshop, and students seem to gain so much from it. Many have contacted me when the semester was over, telling me how much they miss the class. I was particularly gratified by one letter from a former student, who wrote me the following: "I thought that acting was a kind of lie, but now I think it's the best way of understanding other people."

Suggested Plays

The Glass Menagerie and *Summer and Smoke*, by Tennessee Williams
A View From the Bridge by Arthur Miller
LUV by Murray Schisgal
Rocket to the Moon by Clifford Odets
A Loss of Roses by William Inge

Suggested Readings

Boal, Augusto. *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*. London, England: Routledge, 1992.
Chaikin, Joseph. *The Presence of the Actor*. New York, N.Y.: Theater Communications Group, 1972.
Hodgson, J. and Richards, E. *Improvisation*. London, England: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1966.
Jetsmark, Torben. *The Dramatic Body*. Winnipeg, Canada: Blizzard Publishing, Inc., 1982.
Spolin, Viola. *Improvisation For the Theater*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1963.

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It's as difficult to meet as to part.

from a Chinese Poem
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Vivian Tsao

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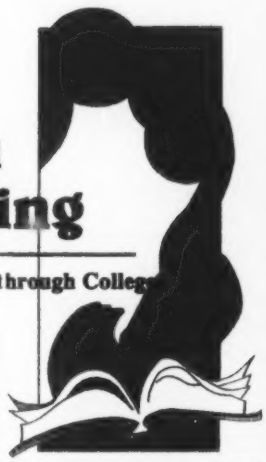

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